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THE KING OF COURT POETS



THE KING OF COURT POETS
A STUDY OF THE WORK
LIFE AND TIMES OF
LODOVICO ARIOSTO
BY
EDMUND G. GARDNER.

NEW YORK,
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TO
MY FRIENDS
SIDNEY JERROLD
AND
MAUD F. JERROLD
I DEDICATE
THIS BOOK

PREFACE

My intention in the following pages has been to combine a sequel to my book entitled *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara* with a somewhat full study of the life and works of Messer Lodovico Ariosto.

Seeing that, in the former volume, I gave as complete a picture as I could of the political and literary conditions of Ferrara, down to the years that immediately preceded the first League of Cambrai and the wars ensuing upon it, I have not thought necessary to describe again the history of the times in which the poet's youth and early manhood were passed, nor to reintroduce the persons with whom he was brought into contact, since I must assume that my readers have already made their acquaintance in my previous book. In my first two chapters, therefore, I deal mainly with the poet's own life during this period—repeating, for the sake of completeness, a few things touching the evolution of the Drama in Ferrara, while reserving, until a later chapter, the production of Ariosto's first and second comedies; but, for the rest, venturing to refer my readers back to the other volume. Then, in the third chapter, I take up the thread of the history where I had left it, with the opening of a fresh epoch in Ferrarese affairs at the conclusion of the League of Cambrai in 1508.

The first and chief of all Messer Lodovico's biographers was himself. The *Satires* contain as admirable a miniature autobiography as the world of letters possesses. His son, Virginio Ariosti, appears to have contemplated writing the life of his father; for he has left us a fragmentary series of prefatory notes, which he probably intended to expand

into a regular biography, and which were first published by Giovanni Andrea Barotti. But, before the sixteenth century closed, Ariosto had three excellent biographers—though their works were hardly intended to be taken as complete biographies in our modern sense of the word—who may be regarded, more or less, as his contemporaries, or who, at least, were in direct communication with the poet's descendants and those who had actually known him.

The first of these was Simone Fornari of Reggio in Calabria, who had studied in northern Italy and derived information from Virginio Ariosti. 'I saw the latter in Ferrara,' he writes, 'when I had left the Paduan University and was hastening towards the worthy and flourishing schools of Pisa; and, verily, I found him right courteous and affable, and he informed me of many things touching the life of his honoured father; as also Messer Gabriele Ariosto, who of the brothers alone liveth—he, too, although oppressed by his continuous infirmities, still managed to hold out until I had read a long and learned *epicedium* of some two hundred heroic verses that he, impelled by fraternal desire, had sung in lamentable wise upon the death of Messer Lodovico his brother.' Fornari's work was published in 1549, as a preface to his exposition of the *Orlando Furioso*. Immediately after Fornari, came the learned Giovan Battista Pigna—destined to be the secretary of Duke Alfonso II. and the Elpino of Tasso's *Aminta*—in the second book of his work entitled *I Romanzi*, published in 1554. Although a pedant of the deepest dye, Pigna was a man of solid erudition and critical insight, and his remarks upon Ariosto's works are frequently genuinely illuminating. Ariosto's third biographer was likewise a Ferrarese—Girolamo Garofolo or Garofalo, the son of the famous painter, Benvenuto Tisio—who has preserved some highly picturesque and probably veracious episodes of the poet's life. Garofolo's work was first published with the Venetian edition of the *Orlando* of 1584, to which was also

prefixed a fresh edition of Pigna's life of Ariosto, which contains some interesting additions not to be found in the *Romanzi* nor in the extract published with Ruscelli's edition of the poem in 1556. Between Pigna and Garofolo, a Florentine, Francesco Sansovino (a son of the architect, Jacopo Sansovino), had written a short sketch of Ariosto's life for an edition of the *Orlando* published at Venice in 1562; it is, however, simply based upon Simone Fornari and the *Satires*, and has not the slightest independent value.

The modern epoch in the study of Ariosto opens with the labours of Barotti and Girolamo Baruffaldi the younger, of whom the latter's *Vita di Lodovico Ariosto* still stands as the most complete and thorough yet written, though naturally not corresponding in all respects to the present state of scholarship. English readers need not be reminded of the name of Antonio Panizzi—surely not the least of the many literary links of gold that bind Italy and England together. More lately, every writer who deals with the literature of the Italian Renaissance has, naturally, been bound to study Ariosto; but, of more special works, we have the exhaustive investigations of the sources of the *Orlando* by Pio Rajna, the invaluable researches of Giuseppe Campori and Antonio Cappelli in connection with the life and letters, the brilliant study of Giosuè Carducci on the poet's youth and Latin poetry. The researches of Alessandro Luzio and Rodolfo Renier, throwing light upon all the Court life of the Renaissance in Italy, have naturally not left Messer Lodovico unilluminated; while, for the Ferrara of his latter days, the first volume of Bartolommeo Fontana's masterly biography of the Duchess Renata is of the first importance. To these, and other writers mentioned in my pages, I have the pleasant duty of acknowledging myself greatly indebted.

I have followed Cappelli's text and numeration of the poet's letters, save in the case of the two that are preserved in the British Museum. For the minor poems (with the exception

of the *Satires*) and the comedies, while retaining for convenience of reference the order and numeration adopted in Polidori's well-known edition of the minor works, I have preferred in most cases the text and orthography of the Venetian editions of the sixteenth century, as these undoubtedly come much more near to the poet's own diction. In the case of the *Satires*, while taking account of the early editions and of the researches of Giovanni Tambara, recently published, I have more closely followed the text of the Ferrarese manuscript as reproduced in the admirable Bolognese facsimile of 1875, and, for reasons stated in the book, have gone back to the Giolitine arrangement of these poems. My quotations from the *Orlando Furioso* are, in all cases, direct from Ariosto's own personally superintended edition of October, 1532, and I have ventured upon the extreme conservatism of adhering to the poet's own orthography, and even of retaining the H's in words derived from the Latin, as this undoubtedly was a matter of principle with him. Giovan Battista Giraldi tells us that, in conversation with him, Ariosto would lay great stress upon this, and make merry at the expense of those who did not follow this practice. 'He who takes the H from *huomo*, he would say, is inhuman; and he who mutilates *honore* deserves no honour; if *Hercole* saw his name thus robbed, he would take vengeance upon the thief with his club. And so he would never lift the H from words that by their nature should have it, like *huomo*, *honore*, *humile*, *honesto*, *hoggi*, *hora*, and the like; nor did he only keep to this, but he would never write *Febo*, *Filosofo*, and such words that come down from Latin and Greek, but he always wrote *Phebo*, *Philosopho*.' In the preface to his edition of the *Orlando*, against which Giraldi may be said to hold a brief, Girolamo Ruscelli defends himself for having removed the H from many words that have it in the Latin, and mocks those 'che fan tanti romori per quella loro benedetta H'; but in his *Annotazioni*

et Avvertimenti, at the end of the volume, he admits that, in the famous copy of the poem that Galasso Ariosti had shown him with Lodovico's last marks and corrections, the poet had, with a very few exceptions, left the letter of contention practically untouched.

In the earlier epoch of Ferrarese history, the princes of the House of Este—and, above all, the first Duke Ercole—are far more interesting than the poets who sang their praises. But, in this second period, Ariosto becomes an incomparably more attractive and engaging figure than either Cardinal Ippolito or Duke Alfonso. I have therefore lingered less over the secret records of Estensian diplomacy (for my preoccupation with which, in my previous book, several genial critics took me to task in their reviews) in the present volume, and given more attention to what directly affected the great poet and his work. In the period that followed Ariosto's death, the years of the Counter-Reformation, the interest is of a different order from that of either of the preceding epochs; Dukes and Poets alike are caught up in the whirlwind of one of those great religious movements which, for good or for evil, have touched spirits finely to fine issues. To this period I may, possibly, return in a third volume, if life and the favour of the reading public be still bestowed upon me.

E. G. G.

ROME, *April* 15, 1906.

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THE KING OF COURT POETS

CHAPTER I

THE YOUTH OF LODOVICO ARIOSTO

‘PERHAPS those are not far wrong,’ wrote Dante at the beginning of the fourteenth century, ‘who assert that the Bolognese speak with a more beautiful speech; since they appropriate something for their own vernacular from the Imolese, Ferrarese, and Modenese, their neighbours. . . . These citizens receive from the Imolese a smoothness and softness, but from the Ferrarese and Modenese a certain garrulity, which is characteristic of the Lombards. This we believe to have remained to the natives of this district from the commixture of the Lombard immigrants; and this is the cause why we find that there has been no poet among the Ferrarese, Modenese, or Reggians. For, being accustomed to their own garrulity, they can in no wise come to the courtly vernacular without a certain acerbity.’¹

In the fifteenth century, when Guarino of Verona and, under his auspices, his princely pupil, the Marchese Leonello, had effected the intellectual transformation of Ferrara, there was no scarcity of poets in the Latin tongue in the capital itself, in Modena, and in Reggio; nor was the *garrulitas*, noted a hundred and fifty years before by Dante, their least distinguishing feature. ‘There were many poets then,’ says a recent writer, ‘but little poetry. All are animated by a powerful passion for singing, and all are void of originality and of thought.’² A singer of Florentine origin and noble of Ferrara,

¹ *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, i. 15.

² Bertoni, *La Biblioteca Estense*, p. 111.

Tito Vespasiano Strozzi, had risen out of the vulgar herd as a genuinely inspired as well as learned poet, though still in the Latin tongue alone. His more famous nephew, a citizen of Reggio, Count Matteo Maria Boiardo, had used the vernacular—hardly yet the ideal language that Dante was seeking—for the most beautiful collection of lyrics and the greatest long poem, unfinished though it be, that the Quattrocento gave the world. But it was from Bolognese stock that the poet was to come, who, born in Reggio and nurtured in Ferrara, should, for more than a moment, ‘fill that empty throne’ of the poet of the *Divina Commedia*, and make the culture and the poetry of the Ferrarese Renaissance the heritage of all Italy.

The Ariosti were an ancient and noble family of Bologna, whose surname originally appears to have been Da Riosto—possibly from Riosto, a small place in the Bolognese territory, of which the name still survives as a fraction of the commune of Pianoro. The earliest of the family of whom there is any record is one Alberto da Riosto; one of his sons, Ugo, was consul of Bologna in 1156, and another, Gherardo, was elected bishop of the city in 1198, and forced in 1213 by Pope Innocent III. to relinquish his see.

The immediate descendants of Ugo were men of law and of arms. Two of his sons, Aldobrandino and Niccolò, went on the Crusade to Syria in 1217. His grandsons were ardent Guelfs, and one, Antonio di Obizzo, was a leader of the republican army that defeated and captured King Enzo in 1249. When all Bologna was divided into factions, and ‘there was very great sedition and mortal battle between the Lambertazzi, who were Ghibellines, and the party of the Geremei, who were Guelfs,’ the Ariosti all adhered to the Geremei. On June 1, 1274, there began a deadly conflict in the streets of the city which lasted for forty days, men fighting madly with each other, day and night, with fire and sword and the rudimentary artillery of the epoch, ‘so that they hardly gave themselves time to eat or to rest.’ The struggle ended in the complete defeat of the Lambertazzi, who fled with their allies (among whom was the noble poet, Dante’s forerunner, Guido Guinizelli) to Faenza. Among the slain adherents of the Geremei were two of the Ariosti—Nembrot di Antonio and his cousin, Bonifazio

di Bittino. Two other cousins, Tommaso and Bonifazio di Princivalle, were among the leaders of the Geremei, who in 1280, when the papal podestà, Bertoldo degli Orsini, had brought about the peaceable return of the Lambertazzi, fought the furious street-battle of December 21 'from morning to evening,' which resulted in a yet mightier slaughter and ruin of the Lambertazzi, those who could escape flying again to Faenza.¹ This Tommaso Ariosti became a Frate Gaudente, and was a strong opponent of the imperial party in the days of Henry VII. By his wife, Cornelia Garisendi, he became the ancestor of the Bolognese branch of the Ariosti, which died out in 1786 with a Niccolò Ariosti, whose daughter, Maria, married one of the Gozzadini. Tommaso's brother, Bonifazio, the name of whose wife has not been recorded, was the ancestor of the chief of the two Ferrarese branches of the family—the branch from which the supreme poet of the Italian Renaissance was to be born.

A granddaughter of this Bonifazio di Princivalle Ariosti was Madonna Lippa, *la bella Lippa da Bologna*, recorded in the *Orlando Furioso* among the wives of the Estensian princes—women whose virtues have adorned those families for which Messer Lodovico not unjustly claims that they were to be ever *ne le lor donne avventurose*.² The mistress and then (but only on her deathbed in 1347) the lawful wife of the Marchese Obizzo II., and by him the mother of Aldobrandino III., Niccolò II., and Alberto, Lippa was the ancestress of all the Dukes of Ferrara and of Modena down to the extinction of the latter duchy in the nineteenth century. Through her favour and influence, the House of the Ariosti took root in Ferrara. Her brothers, Bonifazio and Francesco, were influential in the counsels of their princely nephews, Aldobrandino, Niccolò, and Alberto, from whose hands they received the dignity of knight-hood and the investiture of various fiefs. A cousin of hers, Niccolò di Paolo Ariosti, followed their fortunes, was made a

¹ *Cronica di Bologna* (Muratori, R.I.S. tom. xviii.), coll. 285, 286, 289, 290; Litta, *Celebri Famiglie Italiane*, vol. i., *Ariosto di Bologna*. Cf. the *Serventese dei Geremei e Lambertazzi* (in *Le Rime dei Poeti Bolognesi del secolo xviii.*, edited by T. Casini, Bologna, 1881), lines 238, 330.

² *Orlando Furioso*, xiii. 66, 73.

Ferrarese citizen in 1363, and married a lady of the Ramponi family, by whom he had a son, Folco, of whom comparatively little is known, but whose sons, Aldobrandino, Rinaldo, and Niccolò, were men of influence and importance in the early days of the fifteenth century, and high in favour with the famous and formidable Marchese Niccolò III.—the diplomatic ruler with the countless mistresses, who could be magnanimous in ruling his states and in holding the balance of the Italian peace, but shattered his own domestic happiness in the terrible vengeance he executed upon his faithless wife and his best-loved son.

But there was yet another branch of the Ariosti in Ferrara that won some honour in the world of letters before the rising of the immortal Lodovico. About the middle of the fourteenth century, a Princivalle Ariosti, son of the Nembrot who had perished in the Bolognese faction of 1274, settled in Ferrara. His grandson was the curiously interesting scholar and humanist, Francesco di Princivalle Ariosti, known as ‘Pellegrino,’ who had studied under Guarino. A lawyer by profession, Ser Francesco taught philosophy and civil law in the Ferrarese Studio, and served the Marchese Leonello and Duke Borso as podestà in various places in their states. There was hardly a branch of knowledge that he left untouched; and, if we can barely affirm with candour that he adorned any one of them, he can at least lay claim to the distinction of being a pioneer in two. In his youth, he composed a dramatic religious elegy or eclogue, entitled *Iside*, in Latin elegiacs, which was recited before the Marchese Leonello and his Court in 1444, and which may almost rank as the first of those theatrical entertainments which, a little later, became the glory of the palace of the Estensi. Some sixteen years later, he was the first to deal scientifically with the petroleum oil of Monte Zibio near Sassuolo, in a treatise written in 1460 and dedicated to Duke Borso in 1462. But of more value and importance to the student to-day than his Latin poems and his scientific treatises are his minute and vivid descriptions of Renaissance pomp and parade; most noteworthy of all, perhaps, his striking account of the ceremonies and pageantry of Duke Borso’s Roman triumph and coronation by Pope Paul II. as Duke of Ferrara in 1471, in the form of two letters, in Latin

and Italian, to Borso's destined successor.¹ Francesco was a religious man, too, of devout spirit, and exemplary in his family life; he died in 1484.

A man of a somewhat similar stamp, and like him a lawyer, was Francesco's nephew, Ser Malatesta Ariosti, who had designed and personally directed the whole of the triumphal pageantry that welcomed Duke Borso to Reggio in 1452, after the elevation of Modena and Reggio to the state of duchies by the Emperor Frederick. His Italian rhymes, composed to be recited on this occasion, are in truth but poor things; but his Latin elegies, written during the reign of Borso's predecessor, Leonello, are not altogether devoid of poetic merit. Malatesta, who held several important offices under Borso, died in 1476, and was buried, like all the Ariosti, in San Francesco.² We shall meet his sons, Pandolfo and Carlo, in the course of this history.

It is, however, with the family of Rinaldo di Folco Ariosti that we are more immediately concerned. Messer Rinaldo held the high office of governor of Reggio—a city with which the Ariosti seem always to have been much connected by ties of office and friendship—under Niccolò III., for several years between 1432 and 1440. He married Taddea de' Gozzadini, thus bringing a fresh infusion of gentle and learned Bolognese blood into his stock. He had five sons, Ugo, Bruno, Francesco, Lodovico, and Niccolò, of whom the last-named is the father of our poet; and two daughters, Violante and Anna.

¹ For Francesco Ariosti, see especially Carducci, *La Gioventù di Ludovico Ariosto*, pp. 71-77; Bertoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 157, 158, 178-181. Eleven of his Latin letters and orations, dating from 1464 to 1471, including a striking epistle to Lodovico di Rinaldo Ariosti on the occasion of the latter saying his first Mass, are in Mansi's edition of Baluze, *Miscellanea*, tom. iii. (Lucca, 1762), pp. 169-183. His treatise *De Oleo Montis Zibinii* (more precisely, *De oleorum principis olei Monzibinii ortu et virtute*) was printed at Copenhagen in 1690, and again at Padua in 1713, as an appendix to the book of Bernardino Ramazzini, *De Fontium Mutinensium admiranda scaturigine*. I have given some account, with extracts, of his description of Borso's triumph, from the manuscript in the Biblioteca Chigiana of Rome, in *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara*, pp. 109-113. In a document of January, 1465, he is styled 'Franciscus de Ariostis quondam ser Princivalis,' in Pardi, *Titoli dottorali conferiti dallo Studio di Ferrara*, p. 43. I have followed Litta in taking this branch of the Ariosti as descended from Nembrot di Antonio; Frizzi and Carducci represent them as the descendants of Lippa's brother, Francesco di Jacopo.

² Carducci, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-107; Zambotto, *Silva Cronicarum*, f. 20. A collection of his verses has been edited by A. Levi, *Poesie Latine e Italiane di Malatesta Ariosti* (Florence, 1904).

The poet's aunts married into the Manfredini and Costabili families respectively. Of his uncles, we know but little of Ugo and Bruno; Francesco entered the ducal service in the reign of Borso, was much trusted and employed by Ercole I. in the usual minor embassies and offices of the Court; Lodovico adopted the ecclesiastical profession, became canon and archpriest of the cathedral of Ferrara, and would have been made bishop of Reggio by Duke Ercole, but for the opposition of Pope Sixtus IV., who appointed Buonfrancesco Arlotti (one of the chief Estensian diplomatic agents in Rome) to the vacant see.¹ On his imperial visit to Ferrara in 1469, Frederick III. created Francesco, Lodovico, and their brother Niccolò, Counts of the Lateran Palace and of the Holy Roman Empire, a title which appears, however, only to have been actually used by Niccolò and by Francesco's son, Rinaldo; and we have amusing evidence in the comedies of Niccolò's great son that these lavishly bestowed titles of nobility were not—by him at least—taken seriously, though we shall find him temporarily making use of it to impress the inhabitants of the Garfagnana. After this, the Ariosti bore an eagle sable crowned on a field or, over their ancient family arms—paly of six, azure and argent. Count Niccolò was at that time seneschal to Duke Borso, and it was while filling the same office for Borso's successor, Ercole, soon after the latter's accession in 1471, that he was involved in the shameful and unsuccessful attempt to take the life of the Duke's nephew and rival, Niccolò di Leonello d'Este, at the Court of Mantua—a sordid tale which, fortunately, I need not tell again in this place.

On January 1, 1472, presumably in reward for these dubious services, the Duke made Count Niccolò di Rinaldo Ariosti captain of the citadel of Reggio, an office that had been held

¹ For the archpriest Lodovico, cf. Cappelli, *Lettere di Lodovico Ariosto*, p. xi. and Document I. The letter from Francesco di Princivalle to him on his first Mass, said in presence of the Duke and Court on the Feast of St. George, 1468, is in Mansi's Baluze, *loc. cit.*, pp. 169, 170. Lodovico's name frequently occurs in documents concerning the Studio of Ferrara (Cf. Pardi, *op. cit.*, *passim*). Fra Alessandro Ariosti, apparently a cousin, who had been twice to the Holy Land as a missionary of Sixtus IV., in 1478 dedicated to Lodovico his *Dialogus Itinerarii ad Sinay Montem* (edited by G. Ferraro, Ferrara, 1878).

in former days by, amongst others, Feltrino Boiardo, and another Niccolò Ariosti, the Count's uncle, Niccolò di Folco. The office of captain of the citadel was a purely military one, inferior to that of ducal governor, or captain of the city and district, which had been held, as we have seen, by Niccolò's father, and also by Sigismondo d'Este, the Duke's brother, and was at this time conferred upon the former Judge of the Twelve Sages, Antonio Sandeo, himself connected by marriage with the Ariosti.

Reggio was at that time proverbially one of the gayest and most pleasant cities in the states of the Estensi. 'This city,' wrote Fra Leandro Alberti in the following century, 'is very progressive, noble, and full of people, and abounds in all things necessary for human life. It hath good and fertile territory, that produces in abundance wheat, beans, barley, and other kinds of corn, with good white and red wine. The air is healthy and, so to speak, royal.'¹ It was a strongly fortified place, with a vast citadel, and surrounded by pleasant villas. There is little left there to-day to remind us of the days when it was (in Ariosto's phrase) *Reggio giocondo*, and when the bells rang to acclaim Boiardo's finding of the tremendous name of Rodamonte. Save for a few bits near the Porta Castello, the walls have disappeared. Not a trace remains of the famous citadel that Borso had just rebuilt, the site of which is occupied by the present theatre. The great Romanesque Duomo before which he sat in state as Duke, while the pageants paraded before him in the piazza, has been entirely modernised. The Palace of the Captain is now the chief hotel of the city, the adjacent Palace of the Commune houses a charitable institution, and is modernised.² But the inhabitants will be found as bright and courteous as of old, and many a picturesque bit of Italian life lingers yet in arcaded street or sunlit piazza. Though the country round is flat in its fertility, we are in reach and in sight of the lordly Apennines, while the villa of the Malaguzzi at San Maurizio and the castello of the Boiardi at Scandiano will still bring

¹ *Come dirò, reggia*—a play upon the name of the city. *Descrittione di tutta Italia*, Bologna, 1550, p. 327 v.

² A fresco in the Malaguzzi casino gives a picture of the piazza as it was in the days of Boiardo and Ariosto.

us ultramontane barbarians to the city of Lepidus, as long as romantic poetry is read and loved.

Count Niccolò retained his office of captain of the citadel until the middle of 1481. He purchased much land both in Reggio and in its district, and, what is more important, he took himself a wife from the ladies of the city, marrying Daria Valeri Malaguzzi in September, 1473. The Malaguzzi were petty nobles of Reggio; Daria's father, Gabriele Malaguzzi, was a physician and poet of local reputation, who had died in 1459. The Malaguzzi must have been of considerable wealth, as Daria brought her husband the substantial dowry of one thousand gold ducats. They had houses in the city, one still shown opposite the Duomo, another near the Porta Castello, and villas in the country beyond the gates.¹ On the 8th of September, 1474, Daria's eldest son was born—Lodovico Giovanni Ariosto. He was born in the citadel, not in the house of the Malaguzzi, as a comparatively modern and unauthoritative inscription in the piazza still states. Daria bore her husband four other sons—Gabriele, deformed and crippled, who became a man of letters and a poet, a worshipper and humble imitator of his elder brother; Carlo, who took to the profession of arms, and won renown as a soldier; Galasso and Alessandro, both born after the Ariosti had left Reggio, and both of whom entered the Church—and five daughters, Laura, Taddea, Virginia, Dorotea, and another, who is mentioned in her great brother's first Satire, but whose name is not known.

There is nothing recorded about the personality of Daria, save that she was an affectionate mother, and was still living in the year in which the poet's first Satire was written. A good deal more is naturally known about her husband, and not entirely to his credit. Although fairly upright and sincere, Count Niccolò was an intensely unpleasant character: hard to his inferiors, quarrelsome and aggressive with his equals, unctuous and sanctimonious in his relations with his superiors. There are several letters extant written by him

¹ The youngest of Daria's three brothers, Valerio Malaguzzi, was the father of Annibale and Sigismondo Malaguzzi, Ariosto's two cousins, to whom several of his Satires are addressed.

from the citadel during this, his first residence in Reggio. Writing to the Duke, the Count declares that there are people perpetually talking ill of him in Ferrara—merely through envy, he is assured—and he begs his Excellence, his Celsitude, to give express orders to the governor of Reggio to bid him review his troops every week and report if he is doing his duty or no. ‘Your most illustrious Lordship knows that I never asked you for this, nor for any other office; but, once for all, I gave myself absolutely to you in order that you may dispose of me according to your pleasure; and I am quite certain that you did not give me this office to make me rich, nor did I accept it with that intention, but only to satisfy your Lordship and my own duty and honour, which I value more than all the gold of the world’; and he concludes by representing himself as hopelessly in debt and impoverished by his office, but quite content if he has satisfied the Duke.¹ In another, written to Jacopo Trotti, ducal counsellor in Ferrara, he implores his Magnificence to obtain for him from ‘the Excellence of our most illustrious Lord’ the total exemption from taxation of certain lands which he has purchased in the neighbourhood of Reggio, which, if not taxed, would make him *una bona et bella possessione*.² On a subsequent occasion, after his removal from Reggio, when the Duke wrote to reprove him for his harshness towards his dependants, the Count thanked his sovereign for having corrected him, not as a prince does his servants, but in such fashion as Christ used when He corrected His apostles.³ But, with all this, his fidelity to the House of Este was unimpeachable; for the sake of Ercole (as Paolo Antonio Trotti dared to remind the Duke a few years later), he had risked not merely his honour and his life, but even his own soul. And it is evident that, according to his lights, he was a good father; the poetical tributes of his sons, Lodovico and Gabriele, to his memory bear the unmistakable signs of sincere respect and warm affection.

In the middle of 1481, Count Niccolò Ariosti was removed

¹ Letter of January 28, 1473. Cappelli, Document 2.

² Letter of February 9, 1480. G. B. Venturi, *Relazioni dei Governatori di Reggio al Duca Ercole I.*, pp. 300, 301.

³ Letter of March 7, 1482. Cappelli, pp. xviii., xix.

from Reggio, and sent to succeed his cousin, Galasso Ariosti, as captain of the Polesine of Rovigo :—

‘La terra il cui produr di rose
Le diè piacevol nome in greche voci.’¹

He brought his wife and three little sons, Lodovico, Gabriele, and Carlo, with him. War was imminent between Venice and the Duke of Ferrara—that disastrous ‘War of Ferrara,’ in which practically the whole of Italy was involved. The post was thus one of great danger and responsibility, and the appointment marks the high esteem in which the Count was still held by Ercole. As his second son, Gabriele, was afterwards to sing :—

‘Nec te, care parens semper memorande, silebo ;
Qui primus Venetum sustentas fortiter ictus,
Oppida quum regeres medius quae perfluit amnis
Laeta secans Athesis pingui campestria limo.’²

As early as November, the Venetians were plundering and foraging, and had even occupied certain points of vantage on the frontier. Ercole despatched reinforcements of artillery to Rovigo from the citadels of Modena and Reggio, these two cities being practically unthreatened ; but Niccolò found himself utterly unable to cope with the situation. His harshness and bad temper brought down a heavy rebuke from the Duke in March ;³ but his task would have tried the temper of a better man. When war broke out, he found himself with only some one hundred and fifty men, a large portion of them sick, and in any case quite insufficient to keep the gates of the city. ‘We shall find ourselves in an evil plight,’ he wrote to the Duke, ‘if there be any assault made.’⁴

By the middle of the summer, the triumph of the Venetians all along the Po was complete, and Rovigo became isolated.

¹ ‘The town whose bounty in roses gave it a delightful name in Grecian speech’ (*Orl. Fur.*, iii. 41).

² ‘Nor will I be silent about thee, dear, ever memorable father, who first didst bravely sustain the onslaught of the Venetians, when thou wert ruling the towns through which the Adige flows, streaking fertile plains with rich mud’ (*In obitu Ludovici Ariosti carmen*, p. 22 v.).

³ Cappelli, p. xviii. It was on this occasion that Niccolò defended himself in the words quoted above.

⁴ Cappelli, p. xv.

An attempt to send reinforcements to the town from Ferrara failed, and the Venetians, apparently not realising its helpless situation, offered generous conditions if the citizens would surrender spontaneously. On August 14, Gasparo da San Severino occupied the town in the name of the Signoria of Venice. 'The Castello of Rovigo,' writes Bernardino Zambotto, 'having been already for three months surrounded by the troops of the Signoria of Venice, the men of Rovigo (not being able to have any aid from our Duke, who had tried to send them three hundred foot-soldiers under Zoanne Catanio and Niccolò dal Arpa, who were taken and disarmed by the forces of the Signoria of Venice) opened negotiations with the sons of the Lord Roberto da San Severino to give the castello to the Signoria of Venice, with security for their possessions and other good conditions of exemption. And so did they that to-day the men of Rovigo took arms against the captain who was there for our Duke, Messer Niccolò Ariosti, and similarly against the commissary, Messer Jacomo dal Sagrato, who had with him only one hundred and fifty foot-soldiers; and the citizens of that place introduced the commissary of the Signoria of Venice and Messer Gasparo, called Fracasso, son of the Lord Roberto, shouting *Marco, Marco*; and they demanded the keys of the town from the said captain, who, being unable to resist any more, let them have them. Afterwards they demanded the Rocca from Lanfranco Rangone, who was there within for our Duke; and he, on the following day, surrendered it with all the artillery and ammunition and goods that were there.'¹

The unfortunate Count lost all he possessed, and retired with his wife and children to the villa of Masi in the Polesine di San Giorgio, where he remained for more than two months in utter destitution, waiting for help or orders from the capital, where Duke Ercole lay too ill to take any part in the government of his duchies, which was admirably sustained with virile spirit and resolution by the Duchess Leonora. In October, we find Niccolò writing to her from Masi: 'While I am constrained by necessity to stay in the country through having nothing to put on, I have learned from my brother,

¹ Zambotto, *MS. cit.*, f. 102 v.

Messer Francesco, who came here yesterday evening from Ferrara, and had visited the Excellence of our most illustrious Lord, that his most illustrious Lordship is not as well as whoso loves him could wish, which is a thing that grieves me even to the very heart.¹

Messer Francesco had succeeded his brother as seneschal to the Duke, and was now in Ferrara, leading, together with Rinaldo Costabili, the opposition to the Trotti, whose great wealth (a thing in officials not—in those days at least—acquired by righteous means) and excessive influence with the Duchess made them detested by the people and envied by the other courtiers. While making strenuous professions of being the loyalest of the loyal to the House of Este, and desirous of leading the people in arms against the Venetian invaders, there is documentary evidence that Francesco was himself in negotiation with the Council of Ten, who promised him, if he would bring about the fall of Ferrara, to inscribe him and his sons and legitimate heirs in the Greater Council; to give him five thousand ducats a year and the house of the Trotti, with all that he had received from the Duke during the war, and to make good all that the Duke owed him; to give a bishopric or an abbey to each of two of his relations; to exempt him and his heirs perpetually from all taxation, with possessions in the Ferrarese to the value of one thousand more ducats a year; and faculty of promising to six or eight potent gentlemen in the city an annual provision that should not surpass one thousand ducats for each.² But it is most charitable, and I think the safest, to assume that these were simply offers made by the Republic to tempt him from his allegiance, and that, at the worst, he merely dallied with them—though we have no evidence that he revealed them to his sovereign. As it was, his party prevailed in the counsels of the Duchess, being backed up by the popular clamour; and, in November, while the Duke still lay on his sickbed, and the Venetians, having bridged the Po, were advancing for the siege of the city, the Trotti brothers, Paolo Antonio, Galeazzo, and Bran-

¹ Letter of October 30, 1482. Venturi, p. 301.

² Document of December 30, 1482, in the Registers of the Council of Ten, in Piva, *La Guerra di Ferrara* (Padua, 1893, 1894), ii. p. 20.

deligi (Jacopo had previously been sent as ambassador to Milan), were secretly sent out of Ferrara, the Duchess saving their property by having it conveyed to the Castello as though it had been confiscated.¹

In November, Niccolò Ariosti moved back with his family to Reggio. This district was suffering less than the rest of the Estensian dominion from the ravages of war, but did not pass completely exempt. The greater part of the garrison had been sent to Ferrara, and much confusion and alarm was caused in the city when, in this same month of November, 1482, the protonotary Guido Torello crossed the Enza, and occupied Montecchio and Cavriago, thus threatening Reggio itself, while the Rossi plundered and harried the country round. Count Niccolò, though holding no official position, made himself very busy. Writing to the Duchess, he takes great credit to himself for having reconciled the podestà and the ducal steward, and urges her to forbid the citizens to bear arms. 'Day and night,' he concludes, 'as far as my weak genius is capable, never will you see me weary of doing the work of a true and good servant.'² Leonora, however, appointed her disgraced favourite, Paolo Antonio Trotti, ducal commissary in Reggio, and he entered the city on December 6. The sudden change of front of Pope Sixtus—who, on December 12, broke away from the Venetian alliance, and adhered to the League for the protection of Ferrara—relieved the danger for the present, and we have still extant the joyful and triumphant letter in which Leonora communicates the good tidings to the Anziani of Reggio.

Needless to say that Trotti and Niccolò Ariosti either could not, or would not, work together. The blockade of Ferrara having been raised by the advance of the Duke of Calabria, we find Niccolò there, attempting to persuade Ercole that Trotti was not keeping proper guard over the citadel of Reggio, and that he was giving too much licence to the soldiery. 'I tell you,' wrote the indignant commissary from the citadel, in answer to a ducal remonstrance, 'that if your Excellence chooses to attend to the chatter (*zanze*) of Niccolò degli Ariosti,

¹ See *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara*, pp. 178, 189, 190.

² Letter of November 22, 1482. Cappelli, pp. cxxxv-vi.

who has gone from here and come to Ferrara to accuse me and my men of this and other things, you will have enough to do, even if you should have no other business on hand.’¹

But, on Niccolò's return to Reggio, the two seem to have made friends; for, on May 17, 1483, we find Trotti writing a vigorous letter to the Duke on the former's behalf, reminding him, among other things, of ‘what your Lordship and I know, that, at the time when your friends were working, he did for you—when he paid no regard, not only to his honour and his life, but even to his own soul.’ The reference is obviously to the attempted murder of Niccolò di Leonello d'Este. He ardently beseeches the Duke, at this coming feast-tide of St. Peter, to provide Count Niccolò with some honourable and profitable office. He suggests that he should succeed his cousin Galasso as commissary in the Ferrarese Romagna, or be sent to the Garfagnana, where a better man than the present captain is needed, or be given an appointment in Reggio itself, where he has family interests, and where the writer himself will be his surety. ‘Let your Excellence also take into consideration the incalculable damage that he has suffered this year at Rovigo, which in sooth has scourged him even to the bones; and he is here at Reggio with twelve mouths, and buys even the very sun. May your Lordship also be pleased to make him understand that I have been his intercessor, in order that my rivals may know that my nature is not malign, and that, even as I serve his interests, so would I do the same for them, if I were asked.’²

Apparently this appeal was unsuccessful, for, three months later, we find Trotti writing again in a similar strain, at poor Niccolò's request, asking the Duke, if he has decided to do nothing else, at least to send the writer some kind word with which he may be able to satisfy his petitioner.³ Ariosti appears to have been not ungrateful. The last documentary evidence of his presence in Reggio is of August 31 of this year, 1483; but he most probably stayed on there for the next few years (save for occasional visits to Ferrara), living on the

¹ Trotti to Ercole, letter of January 3, 1483. Venturi, p. 256.

² Letter of May 17, 1483. Venturi, pp. 268, 269.

³ Letter of August 8, 1483. Venturi, p. 278.

lands he had purchased, while his son was growing up from childhood to boy. We can safely assume that at this time young Lodovico must have sometimes seen the noble poet and gallant gentleman with whose work his own masterpiece was to be linked in future years—the Count Matteo Maria Boiardo, who, at the beginning of 1483, had been superseded in the government of Modena by Roberto Strozzi, and had retired to his own castle of Scandiano, from which he frequently, for business or pleasure, came down into Reggio, of which he was a citizen and a strenuous defender of the rights of its Commune. ‘If I were the Emperor,’ he had written a few years before, ‘I should wish to be a Reggian, obedient to and well-beloved by my native city.’

It was shortly after the termination of the war by the disastrous peace of Bagnolo (August, 1484), by which the House of Este was despoiled of the county of Rovigo and its Polesine, that Niccolò Ariosti with his family removed from Reggio to the capital. The actual date is uncertain, but it was more probably about the end of 1485 that young Lodovico, then in his twelfth year, had thus his first sight of the splendid city ever afterwards to be associated with his name. On January 28, 1486, ‘Count Niccolò da Ariosti [*sic*], a most accomplished gentleman of this city, was made Judge of the Twelve Sages of Ferrara by our most illustrious Lord in place of the magnificent Messer Bonifazio Bevilacqua.’¹ This office—which made him practically the chief official of the city and head of the commune—he retained until the end of 1488. There is a curious document extant, of July 12 of this same year, 1486, in which the Duke grants to Count Niccolò an exemption from taxation for all the land which he has acquired in the contado of Reggio, on the somewhat remarkable grounds that it is highly unfitting, *indeccens admodum*, that a man of his rank should be burdened with taxes for these possessions as though he were a mere peasant.²

This was a peculiarly favourable time for the boy Lodovico to have made his first acquaintance with a great city of the Renaissance. Matteo Maria Boiardo had broken off his

¹ Zambotto, MS. cit., f. 173 v.

² Campori, *Notizie per la Vita di Lodovico Ariosto*, p. 6.

poem in despair at the outbreak of the war with Venice; he resumed it now with what has been called a poetical *grido di gioia*:—

‘Come più dolce a’ naviganti pare,
 Poi che fortuna li ha battuti intorno,
 Veder l’onda tranquilla e queto il mare,
 L’aria serena e ’l ciel di stelle adorno ;
 E come il peregrin nel camminare
 S’allegra al vago piano al novo giorno,
 Essendo fuori uscito alla sicura
 De l’aspro monte, per la notte oscura ;
 ‘Così, da poi che l’ infernal tempesta
 De la guerra spietata è dipartita ;
 Poi che tornato è il mondo in gioia e ’n festa,
 E questa Corte più che mai fiorita,
 Farò con più diletto manifesta
 La bella historia, che ho gran tempo ordita.
 Venite ad ascoltare in cortesia,
 Signori e dame e bella baronia.’¹

The decade intervening between the Ferrarese war and the French invasion is, perhaps, the most splendid in outward show in the whole history of the Italian Renaissance. In a glowing page of his Chronicle, a contemporary at Milan, Bernardino Corio, has painted the magnificent Courts of the Princes; the rivalry between the schools of Minerva and Venus, as he calls them; the unblushing, cynical immorality which was reputed *stupendissima cosa*, contrasting with the gathering of poets and scholars, sculptors, painters, musicians, and of everything that made life externally beautiful and gorgeous. But, at Ferrara, the darker side of the many-coloured life of these years was somewhat less obvious. Moral corruption was rampant there as elsewhere; but it was kept somewhat in check by the characters of the two sovereigns

¹ ‘Even as it seems the sweeter to seafarers, after the storm has raged round them, to behold the waves calm and the sea quiet, the air serene and the sky adorned with stars; and as the pilgrim on his way is gladdened by the fair plain at dawn of day, when he has come forth in safety from the steep mountain-pass through the dark night;

‘So, now that the infernal tempest of pitiless war has passed away, now that the world has returned to joy and festivity, and this Court is flowering more than ever, with fresh delight shall I tell the goodly story that I have long time planned. Come to listen in your courtesy, Lords and Ladies and all your noble company’ (*Orlando Innamorato*, III. i. 1, 2).

who sat upon the ducal throne. The Duchess Leonora of Aragon was a woman of almost saintly character, formed of heroic mould. Ercole himself, though far from spotless in his private or his public life, was one of the few rulers of Italy at that time who looked for righteousness and sincerely cared for the interests of his people; the seeds of mysticism were already sown in his mind and heart, which a little later was to impel him to attempt to effectuate the reforms pressed upon him by Savonarola, and, when that failed, to sit at the feet of the stigmatised Dominican nun, Suora Lucia da Narni. But, when young Lodovico came to Ferrara, Ercole was mainly absorbed in a more mundane undertaking in which his labours were destined to bear more permanent fruit—the restoration of the drama of the Latin comedians and its adaptation to modern conditions. It is uncertain how far the Duke's own classical knowledge extended, but he had for many years taken a profound interest in the comedies of Terence and Plautus, and had had translations made for him by Battista Guarini, the learned son of the great Veronese humanist. He was somewhat exacting, too, as to the character and veracity of these translations.

‘Messer Agostino has told me,’ wrote Battista to the Duke, ‘that your Excellence would not have me depart from the meaning of Plautus, and this because it was said that in the *Aulularia* I had put many things which were not in Plautus. To this I reply that I do not believe that I have in the least gone away from the spirit of Plautus, nor even from his words. I have, indeed, put “musk” and “civet,” where there is in the text “sellers of perfumes for anointing to give a pleasant smell.” But it seemed to me a much better translation to name these scents and reduce the thing to modern fashion, than, by trying to render word for word, to make an obscure translation and devoid of savour. I spoke also of pastimes and jewels, and decorated dresses and silken kirtles, which things are all in Plautus, if the words are properly explained to your Lordship.’¹ Messer Battista goes on to defend a free

¹ The reference is apparently to the scene between Megadorus and Euclio in *Aulularia*, end of Act iii., where Guarini had evidently been adapting the wants of the comedian's women to those of the ladies of his own day.

translation rather than a literal rendering, but adds: 'Nevertheless, in this business my design is only to please your Excellence; I care nothing for the rest. So, in that fable and the others, let your Lordship only say what you want done. All the same, I shall not depart from what Plautus said any more than I believe I have done in the past—as your Excellence will find, if you will have the words explained by some one who understands.'

And, a week later, we find him writing: 'Now I send you herewith the fable called *Curculio*, and, if it shall seem to your Excellence that it is not so pleasing as you would desire, it must be imputed to the author and not to me. I force myself to follow exactly the words of the text, albeit in certain places it seems to me better to take the meaning and construct a good passage upon it. Nevertheless, I shall always obey you strictly, because this thing is done for your most illustrious Lordship and not for any one else.'¹

Now that peace was restored to Ferrara, the Duke deemed that the time had come to carry out his long-cherished desire, and have these comedies played before him, sumptuously mounted. We may take January 25, 1486, as the birthday of the modern Italian drama. The stage was set up in the cortile of the palace opposite the chapel, and an Italian version of the *Menaechmi* of Plautus was performed to an immense audience, who received it with enthusiasm—the Marquis of Mantua having come to the city the day before to be present. In the following January, 1487, on the occasion of the marriage of Giulio Tassoni and Ippolita de' Contrari, an original Italian play, the *Favola di Cefalo*, by the Duke's nephew, Niccolò da Correggio, was produced; and, a few days later, to honour the wedding of Annibale Bentivoglio with Ercole's bastard daughter Lucrezia, the *Amphitruo* of Plautus followed, probably in the still extant version due to Pandolfo Collenuccio. And this was but the beginning of a long series of similar performances throughout Duke Ercole's reign, of which I have already spoken elsewhere. As a rule, the comedy of the evening was not played alone, but there were musical interludes and

¹ Letters of February 18 and 26, 1479. Luzio and Renier, *Commedie classiche in Ferrara*, pp. 177, 178 n.

allegorical pageants, with morris-dances and the like, between the acts. Thus we read in Zambotto's Chronicle that a heavy fall of rain interrupted the first performance of the *Amphitruo*; but that, when it was played through again on February 3, following, for the Marquis of Mantua, the entertainment was brought to a conclusion with the pageant of the Labours of Hercules. And it is needless to describe again the culmination of comedies and interludes which, sixteen years later, was to welcome Lucrezia Borgia to Ferrara.

It was the express desire of the Duke that 'his most prosperous people of Ferrara' should share in these entertainments, so far as space permitted. When the performances were given in the Sala Grande of the palace, the numbers were necessarily restricted; but when they took place in the cortile, they were practically open to the public; and, according to Zambotto, as many as ten thousand persons witnessed the performance of the *Menaechmi*, which inaugurated the series.

There can be no doubt that the Judge of the Twelve Sages took his little boys to these entertainments, and we can well imagine how Lodovico and Gabriele appreciated the realistic effect of the boat that moved across the stage in the *Menaechmi* with sail and oars and ten persons on board, and how they enthused over the Olympus in the *Amphitruo* with its lamps for stars and little children dressed as planets.¹ Indeed, we are told that the youthful poet was so fired with what he saw that he started dramatic performances on his own account in his father's house, beginning with the fable of Thisbe, and followed it up with others of the same kind. One of his earliest biographers, Garofolo, writes: 'If it sometimes happened that his father and mother had gone out of the house, he would dress his little brothers and sisters in the most suitable clothes he could lay hands on, and make them come out of the rooms into the hall, reciting, like stage-players, what he had invented for them.'

The conduct of Niccolò Ariosti, as Judge of the Twelve Sages, was far from exciting general satisfaction in Ferrara. When, in the spring of 1487, the Duke left the city on that abortive pilgrimage to Galicia which Pope Innocent VIII.

¹ *Diario Ferrarese*, col. 278; Zambotto, MS. *cit.*, ff. 181 v.-182 v.

insisted upon changing to a ceremonious visit to Rome, Count Niccolò was one of the officials to whom he specially commended the charge of his State. An anonymous versifier—who, if not Antonio Cammelli da Pistoia himself, was at least a clever imitator of his style—seized the opportunity for producing a series of satirical sonnets against him.¹ Niccolò is represented as a rapacious wolf and public robber, an insatiable monster of avarice and injustice, a cruel oppressor and devourer of the poor; an extortioner and a hypocrite, imploring the Duchess to proclaim him a Fabricius or Cato of Utica. The most effective of all is a sonnet in the form of a dialogue between Niccolò and two of his satellites and a poor countryman who, having brought a lamb to sell in the market, is compelled to give it up, piteously protesting that he has a wife and five little children to support.² It is horribly cruel and piteous; I do not quote it, simply because, after all, a modern author has a certain duty of respect to the father of the man whose life he is writing, even if he lived four centuries ago, and may hope that the thing is a libel. In another sonnet Daria Malaguzzi appears, pleading respectfully with her husband, declaring that she dares not for shame go out of her house any more; and it is at least pleasant to find that the satirist has not a word to say against the character of the poet's mother.

On January 1, 1489, Galeazzo Trotti was appointed Judge of the Twelve Sages, in place of Count Niccolò Ariosti, who was designated captain of Modena for the kalends of March.³ The sonneteer at once comes forward again, picturing the wild popular rejoicing in Ferrara, thanking the Duke for having delivered them: still more grateful would he be if the *lupo rapace* were hanged on a gallows in the piazza; Modena, on the other hand, lamenting in direful apprehension, calls for mercy and for aid from St. Geminianus, by all the power he has in Heaven with Supreme Jove, against the evil and

¹ They are twenty-three in number, contained in the *Sonetti giocosi di Antonio da Pistoia e sonetti satirici senza nome di autore*, edited by Antonio Cappelli, Bologna, 1865. In spite of the editor's doubts (Introduction, pp. 16, 17), it seems to me hard to suppose that they were written by any lesser satirist than Antonio da Pistoia himself.

² *Loc. cit.*, Sonnet xviii.

³ Zambotto, *MS. cit.*, f. 204.

ravenous beast that is approaching to devour her. Niccolò and Daria are represented, in the meanwhile, on their way; Daria beseeches him to be wise and rob no more, while Niccolò declares that he will devour even the marble balcony of the governor's palace of Modena when he gets there.¹

Our Count Niccolò held the office of ducal captain in the turbulent and factious city of Modena until March, 1492; we know nothing about his conduct while there, and the Chronicle of Jacopino de' Bianchi (the father of Tomasino) is a blank for those years. It was at Modena, shortly before the Count's return to Ferrara, that Lodovico's youngest brother, Alessandro, was born.

It seems most probable that Lodovico did not leave the capital, but was left in the house of the Ariosti under the charge of one or other of his uncles—Francesco, the head of the family, and still an important personage in the Court, or Lodovico, the canon and archpriest, himself an authority in the field upon which the youth was expected by his father to work. With his cousin, Rinaldo di Francesco, a wealthy and dashing young noble, he was on excellent terms, in spite of the former's superior age and very different tastes; but his best-loved kinsman was Messer Pandolfo, the son of Malatesta Ariosti, of about the same age as himself and devoted to the study of literature. Count Niccolò was bent upon his eldest son becoming a notary, and—probably in the latter part of 1488, when the boy was fourteen years old and his father was anticipating his own removal from the city—had placed him at the Studio under the professorship of Giovanni Sadoletto of Modena (the father of the famous cardinal), who held the chair of law. At a time when all Ferrara was delighting in the ducal dramatic entertainments, and ringing with the fame of the new romantic poem of *Orlando Innamorato*, of which the Count of Scandiano had just published the first and second parts, Lodovico hated his uncongenial work, and but for his father's authority—Count Niccolò being, we can well imagine, not a man to be trifled with—would have thrown it up for more congenial studies. 'Never did he look at a book,' says his earliest biographer, 'that belonged to the study of the law ;

¹ *Loc. cit.*, Sonnets xx., xxi., xxii.

though, restrained by his respect for his father, he dared not openly lay aside what his father desired that he should learn. But in secret he consumed all that time only in reading the fables of romances of every kind that came into his hands.¹ Messer Lodovico himself, however, seems to imply that he was not entirely disregardful of his father's wishes:—

‘Ahi lasso, quando hebbi al pegaseo melo
L'età disposta, che le fresche guancie
Non si vedeano anchor fiorir d'un pelo,
Mio padre mi cacciò con spiedi e lance,
Non che con sproni, a volger testi e chiose,
E me occupò cinque anni in quelle ciancie.’²

Notwithstanding the solemn reputation and somewhat overwhelming erudition of the professors and readers, we may suppose that the students of the Ferrarese Studio were not less merry than their fellows elsewhere. Leonello and Borso had forbidden them to go about in masquerade; and one Giovanni Francesco Suardo, apparently on behalf of his fellows, had written a sonnet to Leonello, explaining that they could not possibly dance in academic dress, ‘che con la cappa non si può ballare,’ and on Borso's accession he had sent him an ode, beseeching him ‘with devout and just prayers’ that he would vouchsafe to let them ‘transvestire’: ‘so that thy great worth and thy courtesy may be seen from the very beginning of thy reign.’³

The sovereigns had likewise forbidden the students gambling, *il giuoco*, about which the ‘University of the scholars’ had appealed to Borso, ‘our Lord and special benefactor,’ asserting that ‘no one is reckoned of worth or held in repute among scholars, if in the course of his studies he does not once or twice stake his books’; and they declared that they had a statute (which, they regretted to say, they could not produce as one of their rectors had lost it) which gave them the right to gamble as much as they liked without any interference from

¹ Fornari, i. p. 17.

² ‘Alas! when I was in age most disposed for poesy, for not a single hair was yet seen growing on my fresh cheeks,

‘My father drove me with goads and lances, not merely with spurs, to turn over texts and glosses, and kept me to that rubbish for five years’ (*Satire* vi. 154-159).

³ G. Secco-Suardo, *Lo Studio di Ferrara*, pp. 113, 114.

the authorities.¹ Ercole appears to have allowed them to masquerade, as long as they did not go to the schools *in maschera* and interfere with the lectures. We read in the Chronicle, under January 1, 1486: 'The youths of Ferrara to-day began to go *in maschera*, with permission of our most illustrious Duke, Messer Ercole; and proclamation was made in his name that no person shall dare to bear sticks thicker than the statute allows, under pain of confiscation of his goods; and that no masked person shall exchange blows or wound others, under pain of the gallows.'²

The more serious functions of university life were carried out in the Duomo, with great pomp and ceremony, frequently in the presence of the Duke or other members of the reigning House. Zambotto, himself a member of the university in those days, is full of information on this point. At the installation of the new rectors of the universities composing the Studio, and more especially at the reopening of studies in the autumn term, some prominent student would deliver an oration—frequently in verse—known as the *oratione de lo Studio* or the *oratione del principio de lo Studio*. Thus, at the reopening of studies in the autumn of 1486, on October 22, 'Messer Antonio Tebaldeo, our citizen and scholar, made the oration of the Studio for the university of the physicians and artists in the cathedral before the Excellence of our Duke and the Visdomino and other magnates, gentlemen, and doctors, who sat above in special tribunals, while he declaimed in the pulpit in verse, and was very greatly commended.' Similarly, on October 29, the opening oration on behalf of the jurists, *in laude de le leggi*, was delivered by a Sicilian scholar. In like wise, on the same occasion in 1488, on November 1, in the cathedral in presence of the Duke, Lodovico Bonazolo scholar in arts, made the *oratione de lo Studio*; and on the next day Battista Ariosti, scholar in canon law, delivered the *oratione del principio de lo Studio*, for the jurists.³ It was in the Duomo too that, at the end of their academic career, scholars received the doctorate—in canon law, civil law, arts

¹ G. Secco-Suardo, *Lo Studio di Ferrara*, p. 114.

² Zambotto, MS. *cit.*, f. 173.

³ Zambotto, MS. *cit.*, ff. 175 v., 179, 202 v.

and medicine, theology—accompanied by their promoters (the professors or other distinguished personages who presented them for their degrees) and their witnesses (their fellow-students or other friends). And, when any distinguished foreigner, or any notable of the Court or the city, whom the authorities desired particularly to honour, took his degree, the Duke himself or other members of the House of Este would be present.¹

Thus passed for young Lodovico the years 1490 and 1491, ostensibly occupied by him in the study of the law, in reality taking full advantage of his father's absence to work out his own salvation. These were the years, it will be remembered, of the marriages of the two Estensian princesses, to whom he was in after years to raise a superb monument in the golden octaves of the *Orlando*, Isabella and Beatrice, to Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, and Lodovico Sforza, Duke of Bari and effective ruler of Milan. It is probable that a number of young men and youths of the city and university were employed by the Duke in the performances of the *Amphitruo* and the *Menaechmi*, with which he graced the marriage of his heir, the hereditary Prince Alfonso, with Anna Sforza in February, 1491; but we do not know whether Lodovico Ariosto had as yet attracted the attention of his sovereign in this capacity.

When Count Niccolò returned from Modena in March, 1492, he was by no means satisfied with the progress of his son and heir, and proceeded to read him a tremendous lecture, probably assuring him (in anticipation of a certain comedy) that he was fast becoming 'uno delli più tristi e dissoluti giovani di questa città.' As a matter of fact, there were no grounds at all for the more serious part of the Count's accusation; but the younger brother, Gabriele, who was present, was profoundly edified at the silent humility with which Lodovico, without attempting to exculpate himself, drank in his father's words, and at the promise he made at the end to be more obedient in the future. But when the worthy Count had made a dignified exit from the room, Lodovico explained to his admiring junior that he had not interrupted his father to defend himself,

¹ Cf. Pardi, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

because the paternal admonition was such excellent copy—the very thing he wanted for the comedy which he was beginning. In fact, so absorbed was he in considering how to adapt it to his purpose, that he neither thought of telling his father that he was innocent nor realised that the scene was taking place in real life.¹ Thus do the austere ducal captain of Modena and his poet-son become transformed into old Crisobolo of Mitylene and Erofilo.

Whether it be taken as a sign of amendment or not, we have at least documentary evidence of Lodovico's presence at the Studio after his father's return. On August 8, 1492, 'Ludovicus Nicolai de Ariostis, legum scholaris Ferrariensis,' and 'Joannes Franciscus de Budis de Cesena, decretorum scholaris,' are the witnesses to Tommaso Fusco da Montefiorino receiving the doctorate in canon and civil law.² And in the following year, May 15, 1493, 'Joannes Franciscus Budus et Ludovicus de Ariostis, legum scholares,' are the witnesses to Jacopo de' Barzelieri of Finale taking a similar degree.³ Of these fellow-students and presumably friends of the poet, we know nothing of Giovanni Francesco de' Budi or of Jacopo de' Barzelieri; but Tommaso Fusco is clearly a relative of the Tommaso Fusco who was teacher of Greek to the Cardinal Ippolito, recorded in the last canto of the *Orlando*.⁴

Duke Ercole was by no means the only patron of the drama in Ferrara. Young Ariosto had probably been present at some of the gatherings in the Palazzo Strozzi, where the magnifico Tito Vespasiano exhibited scenic displays that excited the admiration of the art-loving Ferrarese. 'He was splendid and magnificent,' writes Tito Vespasiano's Florentine kinsman,

¹ *La vita di M. Lodovico Ariosto tratta in compendio da i Romanzi del Sig. G. B. Pigna*. Cf. *La Cassaria*, Act v. Sc. 2.

² Pardi, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91. Pardi has 'Thomas F[a]ustus de Monte Florum,' but the correction to 'Fuscus' is surely obvious. On March 17, 1496, 'Lactantius Fuscus de Monte Florum' took his doctorate in arts and medicine, *ibid.*, pp. 100, 101.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 93. We have a number of recorded instances of other members of the Ariosto family thus taking part in the life of the Studio, but only of two of them actually receiving the doctorate; Lodovico di Rinaldo Ariosti (the poet's uncle) receiving the doctorate of canon law on June 4, 1456, and Battista Ariosti (paternity not given) the same degree on July 6, 1497. *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 102.

⁴ Chronological considerations make it improbable that he is either Messer Tommaso himself or his nephew, the youthful Count to whom Ariosto addressed a Latin ode (*Carm.* i. 12).

Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi, 'in producing comic spectacles in his own house, with royal mountings and banquetings, in the presence of the Lord Duke and all the people of Ferrara.'¹ On May 10 of this year, 1493, Messer Tito gave a specially sumptuous entertainment of this kind to celebrate the marriage of his son Guido with Simona degli Uberti, and Isabella d'Este honoured it with her gracious presence. 'After dinner,' she wrote to her husband, 'there was represented a comedy newly composed by Messer Ercole Strozzi, with certain morris-dances in the middle, which was really most delightful, and my lord Father was there with a large gathering.'² A guess might be hazarded that the future poet of the *Orlando Furioso*, who was intimate with Ercole Strozzi and who, a few months later, was employed by the Duke in a similar capacity, had been one of the actors.

It is, perhaps, even more probable that Ariosto had some part in the festivities that welcomed Lodovico Sforza, *Il Moro*, and Beatrice to Ferrara a few days later. The Moro and his young Ferrarese bride had an enthusiastic popular ovation, on May 18, when they arrived. On the following days there were races, banquets, and tournaments in which Galeazzo da San Severino, Sforza's son-in-law and leader of his armies, particularly distinguished himself.³ And there were the inevitable dramatic performances, without which no entertainment seemed complete to Duke Ercole, and in which his sons-in-law of Bari and Mantua pleased him by professing equal delight. At Sforza's request, that rather mysterious comedy of Ercole Strozzi was given again, this time in the garden of the ducal palace, with fresh interludes, sumptuously mounted, inserted by Duke Ercole himself. We know nothing of the subject of this play, but it apparently contained things that might have caught the conscience of Duke Lodovico, had it not been more hardened by Italian cynicism than was that of King Claudius of Denmark. Writing to the Marchesana Isabella, Bernardino de' Prosperi tells her that the performance was a very great

¹ *Vite degli uomini illustri della Casa Strozzi* (Florence, 1892), pp. 59, 60.

² Luzio and Renier, *Mantova e Urbino*, p. 66 n.

³ *Diario Ferrarese*, coll. 283, 284. Cf. also Luzio and Renier, *Delle Relazioni di Isabella d'Este con Lodovico e Beatrice Sforza*, p. 373.

success; 'but, between your Ladyship and me, it seemed to many that the matter was in some sort against the Lord Lodovico, and that it would have been better not to have played it; nevertheless, he was the cause of having it played, because, when he saw the argument, it pleased him, and he said that he wished to see it.'¹ On the following day, the *Menaechmi* was played again before the Court and its illustrious guests, and it seems more than probable that Ariosto was one of the actors. The Lord Lodovico was again delighted.

Young Lodovico Ariosto was soon to be released from the uncongenial fetters of the law. On July 28, following, the Marchesana Isabella (who had come to Ferrara to be near her mother, who was fast breaking down in health, and suffering terribly from apprehension at the political situation) wrote to her husband at Mantua: 'The most illustrious Lord my Father prays your Lordship kindly to lend him two turbans and two Turkish costumes, to dress two persons, which he would like to bring with him to Milan for the comedy of Menechino [*sic*], which he wishes to give for the satisfaction of the Lord Lodovico.'² Ercole appears to have been flattered at this testimony of the Duke of Bari to the success of his dramatic experiments; and, on August 15, he set out with a goodly company from Ferrara for Milan, by way of Mantua and Pavia, 'to enjoy himself and to have certain comedies played.'³ Don Alfonso, the hereditary Prince of Ferrara (so the heirs to these Italian duchies were styled), was one of the party.

On the previous day, Ercole had written to the Marquis of Mantua, who was to send him a bucentaur, upon which to ascend the Po: 'Besides those whose names are contained in the list, we shall have with us about twenty youths, whom we are going to bring to have some comedies recited.'⁴ And among these 'twenty youths' was Lodovico Ariosto himself, then nineteen years old. From the notes left by his son Virginio, we know that the latter, had he written his projected life of his father, would have told us in detail 'how he was brought by Duke

¹ Letter of May 24, 1493. Luzio and Renier, *Commedie classiche in Ferrara*, p. 179 n.

² Luzio and Renier, *Relazioni*, etc., p. 379.

³ *Diario Ferrarese*, col. 285.

⁴ D'Ancona, *Origini del Teatro Italiano*, ii. pp. 353, 354.

Ercole to Pavia for the purpose of playing comedies.' As it is, our only account of the performances on this occasion is given to us in a vivid letter from Borso da Correggio (a cousin of Niccolò da Correggio) to the Marchesana Isabella. They arrived, he tells her, at Pavia on August 25, and were received with their usual demonstrations of kindness by Lodovico Sforza and the two duchesses—Isabella of Milan, who is with child, and 'our' Beatrice of Bari, who is all joyous and content. 'On the 27th, the comedy of the *Captivi* was played, and it was a great success. To-day we shall have the *Mercator*, and I hope it will pass off equally well; to-morrow the *Poenulus*.' Messer Borso does not mention the *Menaechmi*, which, however, we know to have formed a part of Duke Ercole's programme. Riding, hunting quails, and card-playing fill up the rest of the time—for all but poor Isabella of Aragon, whose husband, the rightful Duke of Milan, Gian Galeazzo, is left out of account, already a mere negligible quantity in his uncle's great game. 'The Duchess of Milan keeps away from us, excepting at the comedies; the Duke of Bari is always caressing and kissing our Duchess; the Lord your Father is all absorbed in the comedies.'¹

The Duke remained the guest of the Sforza at Pavia and Milan until early in October, when he hurried back to Ferrara to find his wife dead. But we have no means of knowing whether Ariosto had previously returned to Ferrara, though, on the whole, this seems more likely.

It was on the occasion of the death of the Duchess of Ferrara (October 11, 1493) that Ariosto wrote the first poem of his which has been preserved to us. It is an elegy in the vernacular, in *terza rima*, in parts imitated from the description of the passing away of Laura in Petrarca's *Trionfo della Morte*. There are naturally copious allusions to the floods of the Po and the eclipse of the moon that were supposed to have forewarned Ferrara of what was to come, with what Burckhardt aptly styles 'the inevitable graveyard flowers, which are scattered in the elegies of all ages'; but the evidently sincere admiration of the poet for the deceased lady, the

¹ Letter dated Pavia, August 28, 1493. Luzio and Renier, *op. cit.*, pp. 379, 380

undoubted fact that a rare and sainted soul is the subject of his verse, lends dignity and inspiration to passages such as those in which Death descends from Heaven to honour her, *honestà e in leggiadro viso*, or Leonora is invoked still to remember her faithful people from her empyreal throne:—

‘Fra que’ spirti del ciel vergini e casti,
 Non disdegnare, o ben venuta donna,
 Guardar le genti tue che al mondo amasti.
 E come in terra a noi fosti Madonna,
 Servendo anchor là su l’usanza antica,
 Riman del popol tuo ferma colonna,
 O in cielo e in terra di virtude amica.’¹

¹ ‘Among those virgin and chaste spirits of Heaven, do not disdain, O most welcome of women, to watch over thy people whom thou in the world didst love.

‘And, as on earth thou wast to us our Lady, so, keeping still there on high thy former wont, remain the steadfast column of thy people, the friend of virtue in heaven and on earth.’

This elegy (xvii. in Polidori) is not included in the early editions of the *Rime*, but was first published by Barotti. Although Agnelli has recently shown (*I Frammenti autografi dell’ Orlando Furioso*) that the MS. in which alone it is found cannot be accepted as an autograph of the poet, there are no conclusive reasons for regarding the poem itself as spurious.

CHAPTER II

FROM FREEDOM TO SERVITUDE

THE year of Italian national disaster, 1494, ended in happiness for young Lodovico Ariosto. The recitations at Pavia, and possibly the success of the elegy on the death of the Duchess, may have convinced Count Niccolò that his son might find a better way to the favour of princes than by following the laws. Seeing that all his efforts to compel him to keep to texts and glosses were in vain, and that time was being wasted, he at length yielded to the persuasions of his kinsman, Pandolfo di Malatesta Ariosti, and left his son at liberty to follow his own bent. In his poetical epistle to Pietro Bembo, some thirty-six years later, Lodovico represents himself as having been almost destitute of classical learning at this time; but there is doubtless some generous exaggeration here, with a view to painting in the strongest colours his debt of gratitude to the man under whose influence he now fell:—

‘Passar venti anni io mi truovavo, et uopo
 Haver di pedagogo, chè a fatica
 Inteso havrei quel che tradusse Esopo.
 Fortuna molto mi fu allhora amica,
 Che mi offerse Gregorio da Spoleti,
 Che ragion vuol eh’io sempre benedica.
 Tenea d’ambe le lingue i bei secreti,
 E potea giudicar se miglior tuba
 Hebbe il figliuol di Venere o di Teti.
 Ma allhora non curai saper di Hecuba
 La rabbiosa ira, e come Ulisse a Rheso
 La vita a un tempo e li cavalli ruba;
 Ch’io volea intender prima in che havea offeso
 Enea Giunon, che’l bel regno da lei
 Gli dovesse d’ Hesperia esser conteso;

Chè 'l saper ne la lingua de gli Achei
 Non mi reputo honor, s'io non intendo
 Prima il parlar de li latini miei.¹

Little seems known of this Gregorio da Spoleto, save that he had been an Augustinian friar, had been prior of the convent of Sant' Agostino in Siena and lecturer at the Sienese Studio in 1459, had returned from the cloister to the world, and was now living in Ferrara in the palace of Rinaldo d'Este, the Duke's half-brother. It does not appear that he held a chair at the Studio, but he was probably teaching the younger Estensian princes and holding classes for more distinguished pupils, who came to him in Rinaldo's palace, the 'Paradiso,' which in after years became the seat of the University. This was but a few paces from the house of Count Niccolò Ariosti, in the present Via Giuoco di Pallone. Gregorio was at least happy in his most famous pupil. Historically a mere shadow, he lives in Messer Lodovico's verse, Italian and Latin alike, as the very type of a devoted and stimulating teacher, one that inspired personal love no less than reverence and gratitude.

Under Gregorio's guidance, Ariosto plunged into the Latin poets in something of the same spirit as that in which Keats romped through Chapman's Homer, and himself turned to composing Latin poetry. So rapid was his progress that he is said to have been chosen, at the reopening of the Studio in the autumn of 1495, to recite an oration in Latin verse in praise of Philosophy, in the presence of the hereditary prince, Don Alfonso, in the Duomo; we are told that the poem was much applauded by the discerning as promising a brilliant literary future for its author, and that he was

¹ 'I found myself passing twenty years and in need of a schoolmaster, for with labour could I have understood him who translated Aesop.

'Fortune then was right friendly to me, for she offered me Gregorio of Spoleto, whom justice wills that I should ever bless.

'Of both languages he held the goodly secrets, and could judge whether the son of Venus or of Thetis had been better sung.

'But then I cared not to know the frenzied anger of Hecuba, and how Ulysses took from Rhesus at once his life and his horses;

'Because I wanted first to hear in what Aeneas had offended Juno, that the fair realm of Hesperia should be denied him by her;

'For I should not count it an honour to be learned in the language of the Greeks, if I did not first understand the speech of my Latins' (*Satire* vi. 163-180).

pointed out to sons by their fathers as an example to follow.¹ We have no documentary evidence to support this;² but a poem in Latin hexameters (or, perhaps, we should say some fragments of a poem) is extant, which must be accepted as Ariosto's since it was selected by Pigna from the materials offered him by the poet's son, and which ostensibly is this very oration; but it exhibits in many respects so much maturity that we are driven to the conclusion that either Gregorio lent considerable aid to his pupil, or Messer Lodovico himself rewrote these portions of his poem in after years.³

The two most important friends of this epoch in Ariosto's life were two men of noble rank and high position, who were destined to acquire fame in very dissimilar fields—Alberto di Leonello Pio and Ercole di Tito Strozzi.

The famous conspiracy of the Pio against Duke Borso and the harsh punishment of the sons of Galasso Pio, in 1469, had by no means ended the dissensions that attached to the lordship of Carpi. Leonello and Marco Pio had dispossessed their cousins, only to leave this heritage of family discord to their own sons—Alberto, the younger Leonello, and Giberto. The mother of Alberto and Leonello was Caterina Pico (the sister of that phoenix of the Quattrocento, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola), who, after the death of her husband, the elder Leonello, in 1477, married Rodolfo Gonzaga, who died a hero's death at Fornovo. Alberto had something of the character and disposition of his maternal uncle, albeit debased by the factious, intriguing spirit of his father's House. He had already been instructed in Latin by Aldo Manuzio and in philosophy by Pomponazzo at Carpi, where, after the death of his father, he shared the lordship with his uncle Marco.

¹ Gabriele Ariosti, Garofolo, Fornari.

² Zambotto, to whom we owe our information about these university orations, and in many cases the names of the young students who delivered them, does not mention this. It may, however, be observed that, although his Chronicle goes down to December, 1504 (and not to 1495 only, as Carducci, p. 142, seems to imply), Zambotto was probably absent from Ferrara on this occasion, as in October, 1495, he went with his family to Mantua to enter upon an office there to which he had been appointed by the Marquis (MS. *cit.*, f. 275). In what capacity could Lodovico have delivered such an oration?

³ *Carm.* i. 1, to which Baruffaldi gave the title *De Laudibus Philosophiae*. For a full discussion of this question, see Carducci, pp. 137-144.



ALFONSO D'ESTE, HEREDITARY PRINCE OF FERRARA (1492).
MEDAL BY NICCOLÒ FIORENTINO.

After the latter's death, Alberto left his brother Leonello to carry on the petty struggle with Marco's son, Giberto, and he came to Ferrara in 1494, to study under Gregorio da Spoleto. It is as the generous patron of Aldo Manuzio, and as the magnificent employer of Baldassare Peruzzi, that Alberto chiefly lives in the story of literature and art; but the student of politics will rather know him as the restless, faithless intriguer of the pontificates of Julius and Leo—a man who was, perhaps, his own worst enemy. He was a year younger than Ariosto, with whom he established a warm friendship, but had a more matured mind; the brilliant hey-day of his youthful manhood as yet gave little presage of his unhappy latter end.

Ercole Strozzi (the great-grandson it will be remembered, of Carlo Strozzi, the adherent of the Parte Guelfa and associate of St. Catherine of Siena, who was exiled from Florence in the Tumult of the Ciompi) was several years older than either Alberto or Lodovico, and stood in no need of Gregorio's instructions; debarred from an active career by his lameness, he had devoted himself heart and soul to letters from his boyhood, and was already bidding fair to rival the fame in Latin poetry of his father, Messer Tito Vespasiano. The latter frequently invited Ariosto to his house, delighted in his conversation, and encouraged a friendly rivalry between him and Ercole.

A political dissension and an assassin's knife, respectively, were to end Lodovico's friendship with Alberto and Ercole. A warmer, more intimate affection was naturally that which united him to his beloved kinsman, Pandolfo Ariosti, the merest, most unsubstantial of shadows to us now (no poems or writings of any kind of his are extant), who shared his pursuits, stimulated him by his example, and apparently gave promise of a brilliant future. One of Lodovico's earliest attempts in Latin verse is an epitaph composed of three distichs for Pandolfo's brother, Folco Ariosti,¹ who fell in 1495, at the age of twenty-four, slain by a cannon-shot while fighting under the banner of France and the command of the Orsini in defence of a castle in Puglia which was assailed

¹ *Carm.* iii. 16.

by the Aragonese forces of King Ferdinand—who, after the hurried retreat of King Charles and the battle of Fornovo, was rapidly winning back the Kingdom.

If Ariosto touched the Italian lyre at all in these years, it was but seldom and lightly—though he undoubtedly revelled in the new edition of the unfinished poem of Count Matteo Maria Boiardo. This youth of Ariosto, in Carducci's much-quoted phrase, 'was all Latin.' 'The fact is that Ariosto, even apart from his natural inclination to the Roman poets, could not in the years of his youth and in Ferrara have helped writing Latin. When Lodovico Ariosto reached his twentieth year, the spring of the classical Renaissance sown by Leonello d'Este and by Guarino da Verona was in Ferrara in its most luxurious vegetation, and inebriated the souls of all with its colours and with its perfumes: all loved, hated, sinned, dreamed in Latin.'¹

Boiardo had broken off his *Orlando* in despair on the first advent of the ultramontane barbarians in the invasion of Charles VIII. in 1494; Francesco Bello brought his *Mambriano* to an abrupt close in the rumours of a fresh invasion in 1496, 'for the fury of the Gallic tempest draws the ancients out of my memory.' In harsh contrast to these are almost the first words in song of their great successor. It was in the summer of 1496, when Charles was at Lyons, and all Italy was agitated with hope or fear at the rumours of three French armies preparing and a great fleet about to set out, that Ariosto wrote his first real poem: the Horatian ode in alcaics, *Ad Philiroem*:—

' Quid Galliarum navibus aut equis
Paret minatus Carolus, asperi
Furore militis tremendo,
Turribus ausoniis ruinam :
Rursus quid hostis prospiciat sibi,
Me nulla tangat cura, sub arbuto
Iacentem aquae ad murmur cadentis,
Dum segetes Corydona flavae
Durum fatigant. Philiroe meum,
Si mutuum optas, ut mihi saepius
Dixisti, amorem, fac corolla

¹ Carducci, p. 37.

Purpureo variata flore
 Amantis udum circumeat caput,
 Quam tu nitenti nexueris manu;
 Mecumque cespite hoc recumbens
 Ad cytharam canito suave.¹

But the rejected stanzas of the ode, in the poet's autograph manuscript at Ferrara, show us that this seeming indifference was, so to speak, artistic rather than moral. Wretched, he sang, the lot of the hireling soldiers who sell their blood for gold; impious the ingratitude of the despots of Italy, who despoil the children of those who had fought to make them potent: *Sint miseri, ut libet esse: non mihi haec sit libido*. 'Ah,' writes the modern successor of Dante and Ariosto, 'the poet of the Satires is already approaching in the first song of the youth of twenty-two! He does not understand, does not yet see Italy; but well he sees and knows and understands the Italian rulers, and protests that he will not serve them. So it is; great geniuses are not born slaves nor flatterers.'² And, or ever his short period of liberty closes, Ariosto will speak out once even more plainly.

For a while, indeed, Lodovico was free and needed not to heed the Court or courtly susceptibilities. Not so his father. This was the time when Duke Ercole was drinking in the prophecies of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, seeking advice and direction from his cell in San Marco at Florence for things both spiritual and temporal, endeavouring to make all Ferrara conform to the Friar's rigid ideals of faith and morals. Ferrara swarmed with monks and nuns, whom young Lodovico probably hated profoundly. His own father was one of the first victims, when Fra Girolamo bade the Duke put a check upon the exactions and evil government of his officials. Count Niccolò Ariosti was at Lugo, as ducal commissary in Romagna, when, in the November of this year, 1496, he put

¹ 'Let Charles prepare with Gallic ships and horses, and threaten ruin to the towers of Italy with fearful martial fury; let his foe make ready for self-defence; to me it shall matter nought, as I lie in the shade hearing the falling water, while the yellow cornfields weary stalwart Corydon. Philiroe, if thou wouldst have me love thee as thou hast often told me, crown the moist head of thy lover with a varied garland of purple flowers which thou hast twined with glowing hand; and, reclining with me upon this sward, sing softly to the lute' (*Carm.* i. 8).

² Carducci, pp. 151-153.

an innocent man to the torture in order to make him deliver up to justice the name of a villain who had done him wrong, whom, for the sake of his own honour, he was shielding. Ercole instantly deprived the Count of his post, condemned him to pay a fine of five hundred gold ducats, and never again to hold any office in his dominions.¹

Civil war on a miniature scale had broken out this summer at Carpi, where the followers of Alberto, who had temporarily returned to his city, and those of Giberto fought with artillery in the streets. From Ferrara, Duke Ercole sent Francesco Ariosti (the poet's uncle) and Giovanni Valla as his commissaries, to intervene. To them he writes, on July 2, that he is coming personally to Carpi in ten or twelve days, 'to adapt these difficulties and controversies'; the commissaries are to inform 'the magnificent Signori dei Pii' of this, and to exhort them in the Duke's name to concord; they are to keep in their hands the castle of Soliera 'with the least demonstration that is possible and without summoning more troops, but quietly and courteously and with such dexterity that no disturbance of any kind arise through this.' Novi was similarly occupied by the soldiery of the Estensi.² The Duke's personal intervention brought about a sort of peace, but it was short-lived. While Alberto and Giberto were arranging the terms at Ferrara, Leonello suddenly seized the gates of Carpi; Giberto at once hurried to Bologna to get aid from Giovanni Bentivoglio, his father-in-law; Alberto appealed similarly to Mantua and Mirandola, to the kinsmen of his wife and mother. A series of petty conflicts spread all over the divided dominions of the Pio, until, in 1500, Giberto ceded his half of the fief to the Duke of Ferrara, receiving Sassuolo with other smaller places in exchange.³ Alberto, considering that the rights of his family were deeply injured by his cousin's act, refused to make a similar cession or exchange, and only waited until the death of Ercole, whose

¹ *Diario Ferrarese*, coll. 337, 338.

² Letters of Ercole I. to Francesco Ariosti and Giovanni Valla, July 2 and 26, 1496. Biblioteca Civica di Ferrara, MS. 210. Cf. *Diario Ferrarese*, col. 329.

³ Cf. Fra Guglielmo Maggi, *Memorie storiche della Città di Carpi* (Carpi, 1707), pp. 69-71.

personal character doubtless inspired the same respect in him as it did in all the other potentates of Italy, to become the deadly enemy of the House of Este.

The only extant letter of Ariosto's that belongs to this epoch in his life is also written, like the poetry, in Latin. It is addressed to Aldo Manuzio, and is an appeal to the great Venetian publisher to send for sale what books he has printed of Marsilio Ficino and other translators of Platonic literature to Ferrara, where Sebastiano dall' Aquila, who is teaching both medicine and philosophy at the Studio, 'readeth Plato in the *Timaeus* on feast-days with a very great audience.' The writer knows that Aldo can supply him and his friends with what they want, from Alberto Pio, 'who, when he returned from thee to us some days ago, brought amongst others a volume in which certain works of some Platonists were collected.'¹

It was in the year of this letter, 1498, that Pietro Bembo—then about twenty-nine years old—came to Ferrara with his father, who had been appointed Visdomino by the Republic of Venice. With him Ariosto contracted a friendship which was destined to prove life-long. Pietro Bembo spent the next two years in the city of the Estensi, and frequently returned to their Court later on. His influence was most undoubtedly a wholesome one on the literary circles of Ferrara. As competent a poet in the Latin tongue as Tito Vespasiano Strozzi himself, and already a sounder Greek scholar than any of the Ferrarese, Bembo had none of the pedant's scorn for the vernacular; to him the great masters of the Italian Trecento—Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio—were sacred classics no less than the poets of Greece and Rome; his own Italian lyrics lacked the genuine inspiration of Boiardo, but set a higher standard of grace and style, and were written in far purer Tuscan. It was, perhaps, his influence as much as the love of Barbara Torelli that converted Ercole Strozzi to write his sonnets in the language of Petrarca. He did, indeed, dissuade Ariosto

¹ Letter i., January 5, 1498. The documentary records of the presence of Sebastiano dall' Aquila as reader in law and medicine at the Studio seem to run from January, 1495, to August, 1502. Cf. Pardi, *op. cit.*, pp. 96, 110; Bertoni, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

from his intention of producing an epic in the vernacular, but mainly on the ground that, comparing what the younger poet had already achieved in Latin with his first attempts in Italian, the decided superiority of his Latin lyrics seemed to show that his special genius lay there. This, however, is a point to which we shall return.

To these years, that immediately followed the coming of Bembo to Ferrara, belong the majority of Ariosto's *Carmina*, ranging from the lovely Tibullian elegy, *Ad Pandulphum Areostum*—Pandolfo singing among the Fauns and Dryads in the shade of the woods of Copparo, while the writer is fettered to the city, held fast in the bonds of a woman's hair—to the harsh, obscene, but intensely effective iambics, *In lenam*, in which the bitterness and disillusion of a fruitless, degrading passion is poured out in furious invective, hardly unworthy of Catullus.¹ And now, while the snowy hands of Phyllis or Philiroe weave their garlands, the poet can spare a thought for his country, when Pope Alexander is prompting King Louis of France to a new invasion of Italy:—

‘ Inter laeta rosaria
 Tristis cura magis tempora assyrio
 Unguento madida insilit,
 Et saevit penitus, si furor, Alpibus
 Saevo Flaminis impetu
 Iam spretis, quatiat Celticus Ausones.
 Hic est qui super impiam
 Cervicem gladius pendulus imminet.’²

The sword fell indeed, and the French conquest of Milan in 1499 cost Ariosto his preceptor and his last opportunity of learning Greek. Lodovico Sforza was not the sole victim of his own intrigues and ambition. Isabella of Aragon, the widow of his hapless nephew, Gian Galeazzo, fled with her daughter Bona to Ischia; but her son Francesco, the rightful

¹ *Carm.* i. 7 and 17. The latter has been translated by Carducci into the *endecasillabo sdrucciolo*, the corresponding Italian metre, pp. 193, 194.

² ‘ Amongst joyous bowers of roses, sad care the more assails brows that are soft with Assyrian ointment, and rages inwardly, if the Frenchman, when he has spurned the Alps at the Priest's fierce bidding, smite the Italians. This is the sword that hangs suspended over the impious neck’ (*Carm.* i. 9).

heir to the duchy, was forced to go as a prisoner into France, and, at his mother's request, Gregorio da Spoleto followed him as tutor:—

‘Mi fu Gregorio da la sfortunata
 Duchessa tolto, e dato a quel figliuolo
 A chi havea il Zio la signoria levata.
 Di che vendetta, ma con suo gran duolo,
 Vide ella presto, ahimè, perchè del fallo
 Quel che peccò non fu punito solo.
 Col zio il nipote, e fu poco intervallo,
 Del stato e de l’haver spogliati in tutto,
 Prigioni andar sotto il dominio gallo.
 Gregorio a’ prieghi d’ Isabella indutto
 Fu a seguir il discepolo là dove
 Lasciò, morendo, i cari amiei in lutto.’¹

In March, 1499, according to Zambotto's Chronicle, Francesco Ariosti died at Modena, where he was captain. If he had really been guilty of treason during the Venetian war, at least no suspicion seems to have attached itself to him; he retained his sovereign's confidence to the last; his body was brought back to Ferrara and buried with very great honour in San Francesco.² His brother, Count Niccolò, did not long survive the loss of Ercole's favour; but died in February, 1500. For both uncle and father, Lodovico composed epitaphs; and, in his lament for the latter, filial affection and genuine respect ring unmistakably true.³ Francesco had left considerable wealth and possessions to his son, the Count Rinaldo, who now became the head of the Ariosti, and who was an only son. Niccolò's substance, though adequate, was much less substantial, and he left a large family, the whole care of which—mother, four younger brothers and five sisters—now devolved upon Lodovico; he was compelled to abandon

¹ ‘Gregorio was taken from me by the unfortunate Duchess, and given to that son from whom the uncle had taken his dominions.

‘For which she soon saw the vengeance, but to her great grief, alas; for he who sinned was not punished alone for the crime.

‘With the uncle the nephew (and but a short while after), utterly despoiled of their state and possessions, both went as prisoners under the Gallic rule.

‘Gregorio was induced by Isabella's prayers to follow his pupil thither, where, dying, he left his dear friends to mourn’ (*Satire* vi. 184-195).

² MS. *cit.*, f. 331.

³ *Carm.* iii. 4 and i. 16.

his studies and his cherished intention of learning Greek, turning, as he puts it, from Mary to Martha:—

‘Mi more il padre, e da Maria il pensiero
 Drieto a Marta bisogna ch’io rivolga,
 Ch’io muti in squarci et in vacchette Homero ;
 Truovi marito e modo che si tolga
 Di casa una sorella e un’altra appresso,
 E che l’heredità non se ne dolga ;
 Coi piccioli fratelli, a i quai successo
 Ero in luogo di padre, far l’ufficio
 Che debito e pietà m’havia commesso ;
 A chi studio, a chi corte, a chi esercitio
 Altro proporre, e procurar non pieghi
 Da le virtudi il molle animo al vizio.’¹

But it was a genuine labour of love, and all his brothers were destined to do him credit in the camp and Court alike, while to the crippled Gabriele, who shared his studies and devoted himself to letters, he seemed a hero of almost super-human mould. Still it was hard to make ends meet; there were times when the poet seemed utterly crushed beneath the burdens he had to bear, above all when, shortly after his father’s death, he had the great sorrow of losing his beloved kinsman, Pandolfo:—

‘Ma si truovò di tanti affanni carca
 Allhor la mente mia, c’hebbi desire
 Che la cocca al mio fil fesse la parca.
 Quel la cui dolce compagnia nutrire
 Solea i miei studi, e stimulando inanzi
 Con dolce emulation solea far ire,
 Il mio parente, amico, fratello, anzi
 L’anima mia, non meza non, ma intiera
 Senza ch’ alcuna parte me ne avanzi,
 Morì, Pandolfo, poco dopo: ah fera
 Scossa c’havesti allhor, stirpe Ariosta,

¹ ‘My father dies, and I must needs turn my thought from Mary to follow Martha, must change Homer for records of household expenses ;

‘I must find a husband and how to settle in life one sister and another after her, without the heritage suffering therefrom.

‘With my little brothers, to whom I now stood in place of their father, I must fulfil the office that duty and piety had committed to me,

‘Proposing study to one, the Court to another, other profession to a third, and taking care that their tender minds turn not aside from the virtues to vice’ (*Satire* vi. 199-210).

Of Ariosto’s sisters, Taddea married Antonio dal Leone; Dorotea and Virginia became Dominican nuns; nothing is known of the other two.

Di ch' egli un ramo e forse il più bello era !
 In tanto honor, vivendo, t'havria posta,
 Ch' altra a quel nè in Ferrara nè in Bologna,
 Onde hai l'antiqua origine, s' accosta.¹

For a while Ariosto had still the consolation of his friendship with Alberto Pio. We have two pieces extant addressed by him to Alberto about this time. In one—a long and curiously interesting poem in hexameters—he condoles with him on the death of his mother, Caterina Pico Gonzaga.² In the other, an alcaic ode beginning *Alberte, proles inclyta Caesarum*, he rejoices with him in the rumour (a false report as it proved) that Gregorio da Spoleto is about to return to Italy: 'My Gregorio, him to whom through Apollo we both owe so much, though I far more than thee—for, if there is anything praiseworthy in me, it is all from him. O joy! he will come back who gave me shape when I was a mere useless, inert log of wood. O joy! I shall see him who gave me more than my own father. Good Gods, I shall again embrace that lovable man.'³

Alas! The increasing needs and difficulties of Messer Lodovico's position were soon to deprive him of his sturdy independence. We may read the last (for the present) utterance of his freedom in the elegy to Ercole Strozzi, written apparently in 1500, after the second and final occupation of Lombardy by the French. The news has come that the Greek humanist and Latin poet, Michele Marullo, has been accidentally drowned in the Cecina. This if true (as it was) is a worse misfortune for all lovers of the Muses than is the ruin of Italy. But why?—

¹ 'My mind was then laden with so many sorrows that I longed for Fate to put an end to my vital thread.

'He whose sweet company was wont to nourish my studies and urge them onward by the stimulus of sweet emulation,

'My kinsman, friend, brother, nay, my very soul (not half, no, but the whole without any part of it remaining to me),

'Pandolfo, died, soon after. Ah! a fierce stroke didst thou then receive, House of Ariosto, of which he was a branch and perchance the fairest!

'Had he lived, he would have put thee in such honour that no other, neither in Ferrara nor in Bologna, whence thou hast thy origin of old, comes near it' (*Satire* vi. 214-228).

² *Carm.* i. 2.

³ *Carm.* i. 3.

'Nam foret haec gravior iactura mihique tibi-
 que, Et quemcunque sacrae Phocidos antra iuvent,
 Quam vidisse malâ tempestate (improba seclî
 Conditio !) clades et Latii interitum,
 Nuper ab occiduis illatum gentibus, olim
 Pressa quibus nostro colla fuere iugo.
 Quid nostra an Gallo regi an servire Latino,
 Si sit idem hinc atque hinc non leve servitium ?
 Barbaricone esse est peius sub nomine quam sub
 Moribus ? At ducibus, Dii, date digna malis,
 Quorum quam imperium gliscente tyrannide tellus
 Saturni Gallos pertulit ante truces ;
 Et servate diu doctumque piumque Marullum,
 Redditeque actutum sospitem eum sociis :
 Qui poterit dulci eloquio, monitisque severis,
 Quos Musarum haustu plurimo ab amne tulit,
 Liberam et immunem (vincto etsi corpore) mentem
 Reddere, et omne animo tollere servitium.
 Sit satis abreptum nuper flevisse parentem :
 Ah grave tot me uno tempore damna pati !'¹

But Lodovico's time was soon to come himself to serve these
 'evil rulers' and to tune his lyre to a very different note.
 With his *Epithalamium*, at the beginning of 1502 for the
 marriage of Alfonso d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia, he first comes
 forward as a Court poet, hailing this much-married lady as
pulcherrima Virgo. Its finest lines are, perhaps, those that
 picture, with some genuine poetic inspiration, the rise of this
 latest-born and goodliest city of the Renaissance :—

'Omnia vertuntur : modicis quae moenibus olim,
 Hinc viridi ripâ, hinc limosâ obducta palude,

¹ 'This would be a heavier misfortune for me and for thee and all whom
 the grots of sacred Phocis delight, than to have beheld (wretched condition
 of the age !) the devastation and the ruin brought of late in direful tempest
 upon Latium by the western nations whose necks in olden days were pressed
 by our yoke. What matters it to us whether we serve a French or an
 Italian king, if there be the same hard slavery in either case? Is it worse
 to be under a barbarian name than under barbarian morals? But, Gods,
 give their deserts to the evil rulers, under whose waxing tyranny the
 land of Saturn has endured dominion before the savage Gauls; and preserve
 for long the learned and pious Marullus, and speedily restore him safe and
 sound to his companions; that with the sweet eloquence and austere pre-
 cepts, which he drew in copious draughts from the stream of the Muses, he
 may give back a free and stainless mind (even if the body be fettered) and
 take away all servitude from the soul. Let it be enough to have but lately
 wept for a father taken from me. Ah, it is hard for me to suffer so many
 losses at once !' (*Carm.* i. 6).

Angustas capiebat opes Ferraria pauper,
 Angustasque domos, angustaque templa Deorum ;
 Apta tamen tenui populo, tenuique senatu ;
 Finitimas inter tantum nunc eminet urbes,
 Quantum inter Bacchi colles pater Apenninus,
 Eridanusve inter fluvios, quos accipit infra,
 Quosque supra e totâ Hesperia Neptunus uterque.
 Nunc, ubi piscoso pellebant gurgite lintrem,
 Aut ubi in aprico siccabant retia campo,
 Regia templa, domus, fora, compita, curia, turres
 Herculeique decent muri, portaeque, viaeque ;
 Vixque suo populo ampla, potenti et moribus aequis
 Et paribus studiis generi contendere Martis.
 At nullos tantum iactat Ferraria cultus,
 Quam quod te dominam accipiat, pulcherrima Virgo.¹

And in another poem of this same date (though the scene by a poetic fiction is laid some years earlier), addressed to Lucrezia on or shortly after her marriage, we have the first picture of Ariosto among the poets of Italy. In Ercole Strozzi's *Venatio*, dedicated to Lucrezia Borgia,² an imaginary hunt is depicted, given by Charles VIII. of France in honour of Cesare Borgia, at the time when the Most Christian was preparing to invade Italy; Ippolito d'Este, Galeazzo da San Severino, and Niccolò da Correggio accompany the king; the chief Italian poets of the day follow the chase. We see Marullo, Bembo, Tebaldeo, Pontano, the aged Tito Strozzi, Timoteo Bendedei; the two Picos, Giovanni and his nephew, Gian Francesco; and last of all young Ariosto, absent-minded, dreaming of erotic elegies and the treacheries of the fair, lets loose his two dogs from the leash in pursuit of an elk:—

¹ 'All things change. Ferrara which of old, girt round by lowly walls, on one side the green river-bank, on the other the marshy lagoon, in poverty held but slender resources, narrow houses and narrow temples of the Gods (albeit enough for her scanty people and scanty senate), now stands out among the neighbouring cities as much as Father Apennine among the vine-clad hills, or the Po among the rivers which the sea on either hand receives above and below out of all Italy. Now, where they pushed their boats over the fish-abounding waters or dried their nets in sunny fields, royal temples shine fair, houses, squares, roads, palaces, the towers and walls of Hercules, and gates and streets; hardly is she ample enough for her people, able to contend with equal manners and the like studies with the sons of Rome. But of nought that she possesses does Ferrara boast so much as that she is receiving thee as mistress, O most beauteous Virgin.'

² *Herculis Strozae Titi filii Venatio ad divam Lucretiam Borgiam Ferrariae ducem*, in Aldo's *Strozii poetae*, pp. 14-30.

'Pardalus et Tygris, thressa haec, gortynius ille,
 Ambo animis cursuque pares, postrema tenebant ;
 Quos piger extremos, Areoste, emittis, adeptam
 Dum tibi Pasiphilen turpi indignaris ab Hemo,
 Divisusque alio mentem, committere tristes
 Intempestivis elegis meditaris amores.'¹

The hounds dash into the trunk of a huge oak and are killed. Ariosto, whom we know from occasional references in his own writings to have been a lover of dogs, weeps and laments over them, while the elk escapes for a moment only to fall by an arrow from Niccolò da Correggio.

But now the fortunes of the House of the Ariosti were being restored. After struggling for more than a year, Lodovico appealed for aid to Duke Ercole; and, early in 1502, almost immediately after Lucrezia's coming to Ferrara, he was appointed captain of the Rocca of Canossa, in his own native Reggian district. The superb panorama of plain and mountain, that hourly lay open to his gaze from this stronghold of the Estensi, probably moved him as little as those distant historical associations that attract us to Canossa from Reggio to-day. Nevertheless, this was a peaceful and happy epoch in his life; for he could come down at intervals to the plain, to attend to the land that had been left to him at his father's death, and solace himself in his natal city, *il natio nido mio*, where his mother's nephew, Sigismondo Malaguzzi, had a villa and estate. In his poetical epistle to Sigismondo, Ariosto has described the place and this pleasant interlude in his life:—

'Già mi fur dolci inviti a empir le carte
 Li luoghi ameni, di che il nostro Reggio,
 E 'l natio nido mio, n' ha la sua parte.
 Il tuo Maurician sempre vagheggio,
 La bella stanza, il Rodano vicino,
 Da le Naiade amato ombroso seggio,
 Il lucido vivaio, onde il giardino
 Si cinge intorno, il fresco rio che corre
 Rigando l'herbe, ove poi fa il molino.

¹ 'Panther and Tigress, the one of Thracian, the other of Cretan breed, well matched in courage and in speed, held the rear; which thou, lazy Ariosto, dost loose at the last, whilst thou broodest over Pasiphile snatched from thee by base Hemus, and, abstracted in thought from all else, dost sadly ponder how to confide thy loves to untimely elegies.'

Non mi si può de la memoria torre
 Le vigne e i solchi del fecondo Iaco,
 La valle, e il colle, e la ben posta torre.
 Cercando hor questo et hor quel loco opaco,
 Quivi in più d'una lingua e in più d'un stile
 Rivi trahea sin dal gorgoneo laco.
 Erano allhora gli anni miei fra Aprile
 E Maggio belli, c'hor l'Ottobre dietro
 Si lasciano, e non pur Luglio e Sestile.
 Ma nè d'Askra potrian nè di Libetro
 L'amene valli, senza il cor sereno,
 Far da me uscir iocunda rima o metro.¹

The little village of San Maurizio well deserves a visit for Ariosto's sake to-day. A short walk from the Porta San Pietro of Reggio, less than two miles along the high road to Modena, will bring us to it. The place is still in part as he describes it. Here is the little stream of the Rodano, 'beloved shady seat of the Naiades'; and, when once the bridge is crossed and the dusty high road left behind, we have vineyards and cornfields, pleasant meadows and wooded ground stretching away southwestwards towards the Apennines. The water-mills are still here, the *fresco rio* and the bright gardens, as when he wrote. The casino of the Malaguzzi villa still stands—an oblong, red-brick building like a large farmhouse, a little way off the road to the right. A small part of it is still occupied by contadini; but the rest remains much as it was. There are two large rooms decorated with indifferent frescoes in honour of the Malaguzzi—one of them giving an interesting picture of the Piazza del Duomo of Reggio in the sixteenth

¹ 'Of old the pleasant places, of which our Reggio, the nest where I was born, has its share, were sweet incitives to me to set pen to paper.

'Ever do I longingly recall thy Mauriziano, that pleasant dwelling near the Rodano, beloved shady seat of the Naiades,

'The clear fish-pond wherewith the garden is girded round, the fresh brook that runs watering the grass where afterwards it supplies the mill.

'Never shall I forget the vines and furrows of fertile Bacchus, the valley, the hill, and the well-placed tower.

'Seeking now this and now that other shady place, there in more than one style and in more than one tongue did I draw waters from the lake of the Muses.

'Fair were then my years between April and May, which now are leaving October behind, not only July and August.

'But neither of Askra nor of Libethrum could the pleasant valleys bring from me cheerful rhymes or measures, without a heart at peace' (*Sat.* iv. 115-135).

century. Thence we go up into three rooms, in which the poet himself stayed and wrote. The walls and ceilings are daubed with later frescoes, but otherwise the rooms retain their original appearance. It was still mainly with Latin odes that these *dolci inviti* impelled him *a empir le carte*, while a beautiful woman of Reggio, whom he calls Lydia, swayed for a while his heart;¹ but a few Italian lyrics may also, perhaps, be assigned to this epoch, and he was already dreaming of the Orlando of his future epic, in which he was to finish what another citizen of Reggio had so nobly begun.

About this time, Ariosto appears to have indulged in a discreditable intrigue with a woman named Maria—practically one of his own servants—by whom he had an illegitimate son, christened Giovanni Battista, whose existence he kept concealed, and who left Ferrara at an early age to become a soldier.

Towards the end of the year 1503, Ariosto gave up the captainate of Canossa, and returned to Ferrara, to enter the service of the unworthy patron whose name, as he wrote in after years, he was to make 'with clear trumpet perchance sound higher than ever dove winged its flight.'²

Ippolito d'Este, the third son of Duke Ercole and Leonora of Aragon, was born in March, 1479, nearly a year after his bastard half-brother Giulio, the son of Isabella Arduino—that Giulio whose name and fortunes were linked to his from the beginning. On Sunday, June 5, 1485, writes Zambotto: 'After High Mass had been sung in the cathedral of Ferrara at the high altar by a certain bishop, the first ecclesiastical orders were given to Don Ippolito da Este, legitimate and natural son of our most illustrious Duke, Lord Ercole, in presence of his mother, Madama the Duchess, Madama Leonora of Aragon, and also to Don Giulio, natural son of the said our Duke.'³ On the death of Gurone d'Este, in the March of the previous year, three rich abbeys had fallen vacant: Nonantola, Gravello, Marola; and Ercole promptly demanded them of Pope Sixtus for these two children. The

¹ Cf. especially *Carm.* i. 10: *Haec certe Lepidi sunt regia moenia.*

² *Sat.* i. 229-231.

³ *MS. cit.*, f. 163.

Pope, however, gave Nonantola to Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, his own nephew, and Marola to the Cardinal of Pavia. Ercole sent Lodovico Paolucci to Rome to strive his utmost that 'at least we have that of Nonantola for Don Ippolito, which we would not for anything in the world consent that others should have, instead of our own folk. If the Holiness of our Lord had to live for ever, we should not mind so much; but considered that, when he dies, things may probably change form, and that Nonantola once belonged to the Bolognese, who are desirous of having it back, and that the influence of a Legate of Bologna who should have that abbey could make us lose Nonantola and overturn our State (because its rights extend to the gates of Modena, to the Reggian district and to the Ferrarese), we do not think that we can suffer it to pass into the hands of any one else, be he who he may.'¹ But Giuliano was as tenacious then as cardinal as he was to prove later on as pontiff, and Nonantola remained in his hands. At the Duke's request, in 1486, Pope Innocent VIII. 'commended' the monastery of Pomposa to Ippolito and created him a protonotary apostolic. 'And we exhort thy Nobility,' he wrote to the young prelate's father, 'to take care that he be brought up in good morals and in letters, so that he may be judged worthy of thee, his father, and be promoted to greater things.'²

After this first step, Ippolito's advance was rapid. The next year, 1487, saw him Archbishop of Esztergom in Hungary, which see he changed ten years later for the bishopric of Zagrab, or Agram; he was raised to the cardinalate with the title of Santa Lucia in Silice by Alexander VI. in 1493, and received the archbishopric of Milan in 1498, to which in 1503 he added the bishopric of Ferrara itself. Under his patronage, Monsignor Giulio obtained a few small benefices only, though the Cardinal assured their father that he saw his brother's interests with the same eyes as his own. Licentious

¹ *Istruzione per Lodovico Paolucci*, March 19, 1484. Archivio di Modena, *Carteggio degli Ambasciatori—Roma*.

² Brief to the Duke of Ferrara, January 3, 1486. *Archivio Vaticano*, xxxix. 19, f. 107. It is somewhat instructive to compare this with the curious letter from the Archivio di Modena in which Ercole, nine years later, admonishes Ippolito concerning the duties of a cardinal. See *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara*, Appendix ii. Document 15.

and worldly, haughty and overbearing, Ippolito was utterly devoid of reverence for God or man; some ability as a diplomatist, according to the cynical, materialistic standpoint of the age, coupled to physical courage and a certain amount of skill in military matters, was the nearest approach to virtue he possessed.

On Ippolito's appointment to the see of Ferrara, Ariosto addressed an epigram to him, extolling the new bishop—for his chastity.¹ The licentiousness of Ippolito's life being a matter of public notoriety, this has been described as outrageous and impudent adulation. But it is obviously no more than a jape, in somewhat questionable taste, and was presumably accepted by his most reverend and illustrious Lordship in the same spirit. It was, as we saw, towards the end of this year, 1503, that the poet entered his service, as *famigliare*, one of the attendant gentlemen of his household; which was a fresh and most grievous impediment to his studies, as the Cardinal scorned poetry, and kept him continually employed, dashing from place to place on diplomatic and other missions:—

‘E di poeta cavallar mi feo :
 Vedi se per le balze e per le fosse
 Io potevo imparar greco o caldeo.
 Mi maraviglio che di me non fosse
 Come di quel philosopho, a chi il sasso
 Ciò che inanzi sapea dal capo scosse.’²

A Mantuan friend of Ariosto's, Lodovico da Bagno, was also in the Cardinal's service in a similar position;³ and, a

¹ *Carm.* ii. 2.

² ‘He turned me from poet to horse-postman. See if I could learn Greek or Chaldean over the rocks and the ditches. I marvel that I did not share the fate of that philosopher from whose head the stone shook what he knew before’ (*Sat.* vi. 238-243).

³ Writing to Ippolito, on January 27, 1504, the Marchesana Isabella says: ‘I have taken singular pleasure at hearing that your most reverend Lordship has conferred the Pieve of Mellara upon Lodovico Bagno, your chamberlain; both because of the love that I bear him in particular and because of my affection for his house, and especially for his father, who was my pleasant companion.’ And, on the same day, she writes to Duke Ercole: ‘I know that your Excellence knows how long and faithfully the late magnifico Messer Guidone da Bagno served this most illustrious House and afterwards myself; for he was a companion to me of such a kind that I am still obliged to him; and therefore I exceedingly desire every advantage and exaltation of his sons.’ Archivio di Modena, *Lettere di Isabella d'Este Gonzaga*.

few years later, the poet managed to place his youngest brother, Alessandro, in the same household in the capacity of *ragazzo*, or page.

I need not tell again the story of the horrors that followed the death of Ercole and the accession of Alfonso I., in 1505 and 1506. Finding himself worsted by the bastard Giulio in the love of Angela Borgia, Ippolito—Cardinal of Santa Lucia, the virgin protectress of the blind—stood by while his hirelings all but extinguished the light of his brother's eyes. Giulio for vengeance joined hands with Ercole's second legitimate son, Don Ferrando, in the conspiracy to slay Alfonso and Ippolito together and make Ferrando Duke—that hideous tragedy that consigned the two half-blinded princes to a prolonged living death in the Tower of the Lions.

Unmistakably vile is the poem which Ariosto wrote on this occasion. The dramatic eclogue, written for recitation in parts, was a favourite form of literary art in the Courts of the Italian Renaissance; Girolamo Benivieni with it had begun his literary career in the circle of Lorenzo de' Medici; Boiardo had put it to more admirable use during the Ferrarese war with Venice. Ariosto's *Egloga* is a poem of nearly three hundred lines in *terza rima*, in which Melibeo, who together with Mopso is driving away the flocks and herds that Alfenio has taken from the treacherous Fereo who sought his life, tells a simpler shepherd, Tirsi, the whole story of the conspiracy of Fereo and Iola in the form of a pastoral allegory. Iola, *d'ogni vizio reo*, is represented as a monster of iniquity, no son of Eraclide but the offspring of Ardeusa (Isabella Arduino) by the abominable Emofilo to whom his master had given the nymph in charge, and who can hardly be identified. The four minor conspirators—Count Albertino Boschetti, Gherardo de' Roberti, Franceschino Boccaccio, and the singing priest Gianni—are figured as the white-haired Silvano and his son-in-law, Boccio, and Gano, fleshy, bland and fat, a vile slave made into a friend by Alfenio's misplaced generosity. Unable to deny that Fereo is the child of Eraclide and *la castissima Argonia*, the poet contents himself with representing his cowardice as the cause of the failure of the conspiracy and his treachery the ruin of his confederates, the whole poem ending in the most extravagant praises of Alfenio, *la nostra guardia e 'l nostro almo*

pastore, and of his Licoria, *la sua donna casta, saggia, bella, cortese e pellegrina*—who is, of course, Lucrezia. Tirsi, who knows nothing of the conspiracy, but is an enthusiastic adorer of Licoria whose marriage with Alfenio he describes as an eye-witness, is evidently Ariosto himself; and a conjecture might be hazarded that Melibeo is Ercole Strozzi.

There is merely a casual reference to Ippolito in the *Egloga*, though at the end of the *Orlando Furioso* the whole salvation of Alfonso and Ferrara is laid to his credit. But more of the tragedy finds expression in an earlier canto, where, in the Cave of Merlin, the sorceress Melissa shows the virgin Bradamante the phantom pageantry of her descendants:—

‘Così con volontà de la donzella
La dotta incantatrice il libro chiuse.
Tutti gli spirti allhora ne la cella
Spariro in fretta, ove eran l’ossa chiuse.
Qui Bradamante, poi che la favella
Le fu concessa usar, la bocca schiuse,
E domandò : Chi son li dua sì tristi,
Che tra Hippolyto e Alfonso habbiamo visti ?

‘Veniano sospirando, e gli occhi bassi
Parean tener, d’ogni baldanza privi ;
E gir lontan da loro io vedea i passi
Dei frati, sì che ne pareano schivi.
Parve ch’a tal domanda si cangiassi
La Maga in viso, e fe de gli occhi rivi,
E gridò : Ah sfortunati, a quanta pena
Lungo instigar d’huomini rei vi mena !

‘O bona prole, o degna d’Hercol buono,
Non vinca il lor fallir vostra bontade :
Di vostro sangue i miseri pur sono ;
Qui ceda la iustitia alla pietade.
Indi soggiunse con più basso suono :
Di ciò dirti più inanzi non accade.
Statti col dolce in bocca, e non ti doglia
Ch’amareggiare al fin non te la voglia.’¹

¹ ‘So with the consent of the damosel the learned sorceress closed the book. All the spirits straightway vanished into the cell where Merlin’s bones were held. Then Bradamante, now that she was allowed to speak, opened her lips and asked : “Who are those two so sad that we have seen between Ippolito and Alfonso ?

“They came sighing, and seemed to keep their eyes cast down, despoiled

In the October of this same year, 1506, Ariosto was sent by the Cardinal on a mission to the latter's half-sister, Lucrezia d'Este Bentivoglio, at Bologna—a few weeks before the expulsion of her husband's family from the city that they had informally ruled for so many years.¹ The object of this mission is not known, but it was, perhaps, to arrange about finding a safe retreat for her and her children in the imminent fall of their House. The world has lost Francia's highly praised portrait of this unfortunate princess, nor does Lorenzo Costa's fresco in the Cappella Bentivoglio of S. Giacomo Maggiore suggest the personality of a beautiful woman; but she was to find her place in the *Orlando Furioso*, with her more favoured sisters in the Palace of Chivalry, among the eight courtly heroines of the Italian Renaissance.²

The *giogo del Cardinal da Este*, however oppressive, had not crushed the poetry out of Messer Lodovico. He had already made much progress with his *Orlando* when, at the end of the following January, he was sent by his patron to Mantua, to congratulate the Marchesana on her safe delivery of a little son (afterwards to be famous as Ferrante Gonzaga). Isabella, who had been enthusiastic over Boiardo, was intensely delighted at the Cardinal's choice of a messenger, and made Ariosto read out to her for two days the cantos that he had composed. 'By the letter of your most reverend Lordship,' she wrote to him by her secretary, Benedetto Capiluppo, 'and by word of mouth from Messer Lodovico Ariosto, I have heard how greatly you are rejoiced at my happy delivery. This has been supremely grateful to me, and so I thank you for this visitation, and particularly for having sent me the said Messer Lodovico; for, besides being welcome to me as representing the person of your most reverend Lordship, he has also on his

of all assurance; and I saw the steps of their brothers move far from them, so that they seemed to shun them." At this question it seemed that the Enchantress changed countenance and poured tears from her eyes. "Ah, unhappy ones," she cried, "to what great torment does the long incitement of evil men bring you!

"O good and worthy sons of good Ercole, let not their fault o'ercome your goodness; the wretched ones are still of your blood; here let justice yield to pity." Then she added in a lower voice: "It needs not to tell thee further of this. Remain with sweet in the mouth, and do not regret that I will not make it bitter for thee at the end" (*Orl. Fur.*, iii. 60-62).

¹ Campori, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

² *Orl. Fur.*, xlii. 87-89.

own account brought me great satisfaction and, by the narration of the work that he is composing, has made me pass these two days not only without weariness, but with very great pleasure. In this, as in all your other actions, you have had the good judgment to choose the person suited to my condition. Of the talk which (besides the visit) we have had together, Messer Lodovico will give an account to your most reverend Lordship.'¹

A little later in this same year, Ariosto had his first and only sight of one of the great makers of contemporary history—Louis XII. of France. In May, with his young brother Alessandro, he formed part of the retinue of the Cardinal Ippolito when the latter went to Milan to salute the Most Christian King.² Anxious to bind the Estensi permanently to the cause of France, Louis offered a stipend to the Duke, and the Cardinal of Rouen put pressure upon Ippolito to urge his brother to accept; but Alfonso, with very great dignity, would not hear of it:—

'Last night we received your letter,' he wrote to Ippolito, 'by which we understand that the most reverend and illustrious lord Legate persists in holding and in urging upon us that we should accept the pension, since it has been offered us by the Most Christian Majesty with so good a heart and on his own initiative. This has made us ponder again over what he proposes to us, since we know that he loves us, and that he is our protector and singular benefactor and stands to us as a father, and that his counsels should have for us the force of precepts and commands. But the more we have considered it, the more do we think it alien from our duty towards the Most Christian Majesty to accept a pension without any advantage to him. And, although the most reverend and illustrious lord Legate urges us to take it, we are convinced that his most reverend Lordship does so only because he considers our advantage, of which, because of the paternal love he bears us, he is for once thinking more than of what befits the King and us; for, as we know not how we could spend the money in the service of the Most Christian Majesty, we should account it

¹ Letter of February 3, 1507. Tiraboschi, vii. part 3, p. 101 (*note*). The conversation probably referred to the affairs of Lucrezia Bentivoglio, whom Isabella was generously protecting.

² Campori, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

dishonourable if we accepted it, seeing that we could do nothing noteworthy with arms with the pension; and (if perchance he assigned it to us for our living) we have no need of it; for, being as we are in peace through the grace of Our Lord God and of his Majesty, we have enough to live on according to our condition. Your Lordship, then, will make our excuses, and say that the Most Christian Majesty has many ways of benefiting us without spending money, according to the course of events, beseeching him to be pleased to keep this money for more opportune and pressing needs and emergencies. His grace is sufficient for us, which we know and trust will not fail us in our needs. We know that it is he who preserves and maintains us our State, so that we reckon that we have from the hand of his Majesty all the profits and income that we draw and receive from it.'¹

The following year, 1508, witnessed the birth of a son and heir to Alfonso and Lucrezia (the future Duke Ercole II.), on April 4, and the mysterious murder of Ercole Strozzi on June 5. Of that still not entirely explained tragedy, and the murdered poet's love for Barbara Torelli, that is usually believed to have been the cause of it—the *rara donna* of Bembo's sonnet, who had drawn from Strozzi's heart *rime leggiadre e conte*, but whose own sonnet on his death far surpasses in fire and pathos any that either her lover or Bembo himself had composed—I have already spoken in full. I will only add that there exists an unpublished document in the State Archives of Modena which possibly throws a new light upon the motives that may have impelled the Duke to order his death. In a long and rather mysterious letter from the Marchesana of Mantua to Alfonso, in the previous year, dated August 15, 1507, Isabella, while professing her unaltered belief in Ercole Strozzi's good faith, had warned her brother not to communicate secrets to him, on the grounds that 'Messer Ercole is brother-in-law of Uberto degli Uberti, who is the greatest rascal of this town and my enemy,' and who comes often to Ferrara to spy, staying with Strozzi.² Is it not possible that

¹ Letter from Alfonso, dated Ferrara, June 8, 1507, to Ippolito at Milan. Archivio di Modena, *Carteggio dei Principi*. Alfonso had spent the spring of this year in attendance upon the King at the siege of Genoa.

² Archivio di Modena, *Lettere di Isabella d'Este Gonzaga*. Cf. *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara*, pp. 519-522.

this suggestion may have worked upon the suspicious mind of the Ferrarese despot and ultimately proved the poet's death-warrant? No hint is given as to the power for which this espionage was being done; but, if it were Rome, would not a reason be at once apparent for the furious accusation launched against Alfonso a few years later by Pope Julius, of having been Ercole Strozzi's murderer?

Be that as it may, Ariosto's tribute to Strozzi's memory, alike in the *Orlando* and in the four Latin distichs of his epitaph,¹ strikes us as frigid and perfunctory. It was, perhaps, impolitic in a member of the Cardinal's household to bestow more generous praise upon one on whom the Duke's displeasure, however secretly, had so terribly fallen.

In the following year, 1509, Ariosto had born to him a second son, who was christened Virginio. To this son, whom he always kept by him in later years, the poet was a devoted father. Virginio's mother was a woman of Modenese origin, Orsolina Catinelli da Sassomarina, daughter of a Giovanni da Sassomarina of Modena, who lived in the Polesine di Sant' Antonio, a suburb of Ferrara.² The story of Messer Lodovico's relations with women is always very mysterious. 'He was much inclined by nature,' writes Garofolo, 'to be enamoured of every object where he perceived beauty and modesty; and, because he loved with great vehemence, he was excessively jealous, and could not endure any one for rival,' and he adds that he was very secret in his loves.³ Most probably, Orsolina remained his mistress for some years longer—until the great emotional crisis of the poet's life to which we shall come presently.

For Ariosto, as for Ferrara, an epoch ends in 1509. The Herculean city of peace was to be dragged into the great wars in which the ultramontane sovereigns were struggling for the possession of Italy, and the poet himself, far from haunts meet for Apollo, was to be whirled up in the hurricane.

¹ *Orl. Fur.*, xlii. 60; *Carm.* iii. 7.

² G. Pardi, *Un' amante dell' Ariosto*.

³ Cf. Ariosto's curious Latin elegy to Bembo, *Carm.* i. 5.

CHAPTER III

IN THE GAME OF THE WORLD

A MORE terrible epoch of slaughter and devastation than she had yet known was preparing for Italy. On December 10, 1508, the infamous League of Cambrai had been signed between the Austrian Caesar Maximilian and the Most Christian King, Louis XII. of France, for the partition of the states of the Venetian Republic. The Catholic Majesty of Ferdinand of Spain and the Holiness of Pope Julius II. were included, and room was left for the Duke of Ferrara, the Marquis of Mantua, and whoso else should claim that the Venetians were occupying any of his territory. The infamy was cloaked with the most shameless hypocrisy, 'as though,' writes Guicciardini, 'the diversity of the words might suffice to transmute the substance of the facts.' A pious preamble—*un proemio molto pietoso*—set forth the common desire of these princes to begin the Crusade against the enemies of the name of Christ, and the obstacles that the Venetians offered to this holy purpose by ambitiously occupying cities that belonged to the Church; these obstacles the allies proposed to remove, in order afterwards to proceed unitedly to such a holy and necessary expedition.

In the division of the spoils the Pope was to have Faenza, Rimini, Ravenna, and Cervia, which no doubt did belong to the Holy See, in the same way as the rest of Romagna might be said to belong to the Papal States; the King of the Romans was to have Padua, Vicenza, and Verona, as belonging to him in the name of the Empire, and Friuli and Treviso as pertaining to the House of Austria; the King of France was to have Cremona, the Ghiradadda, Brescia, Bergamo, and Crema; the King of Spain to have back Trani, Brindisi, Otranto, and the other ports on the Neapolitan coast which had been given in

pledge to Venice for sums of money advanced to the late King Ferdinand II. of Naples. Such was the 'game of the world,' *il giuoco del mondo*, in which the Venetian orator told his Senate that the Pope wished 'to be the lord and master.'¹ With such gamesters as these, it is needless to add that it was played with loaded dice and marked cards.

The Pope hesitated and temporised, although he had been the original instigator of the League. He desired to win back the cities that had been lost to the Holy See, and he cordially hated the Venetians. 'I will not rest,' he had once thundered at their envoy, Pisani, 'until I have made you all the humble fishermen ye once were.' 'Holy Father,' answered the Venetian, 'it will be much easier for us to make you a little priest, if you be not prudent.'² But he dreaded the French, and had no wish to see the Caesarian power extended in Italy. It was only after he had attempted to make terms on his own account with the Republic, and found his overtures contemptuously rejected, that, after having delayed as long as possible, Julius ratified the League at the end of the year.

No reproach can justly be made against the Duke of Ferrara for his adhesion to the League, which he ratified a little later, together with his Mantuan brother-in-law. The Pope was his suzerain, the King of France his constant ally, and he sought but his own. His share in the spoils was to be Rovigo and all the Polesine that in his boyhood the Venetians had wrung from his father, and of which he still held the title of Count, as well as Este and Monselice, the ancient possession of his House; in addition, he was to be let make salt at Comacchio, and to be freed from the Visdomino and all the ancient conventions with the Republic. The Marquis of Mantua was to have Peschiera, and a few small places on the Venetian frontier.

On April 16, 1509, the French herald formally declared war to the Venetians in terms which, as the Doge Leonardo Loredan said, were 'fitting rather to be used against Saracens and Turks, than made to a most Christian Republic.' Chaumont, with the French vanguard, had already begun hostilities

¹ *Sommario della Relazione di Roma di Domenico Trevisano* (April 1, 1510). Alberi, series II. vol. III. p. 34.

² Luigi da Porto, Letter III.

by crossing the Adda on the previous day. Pope Julius followed, on April 27, by intimating to the Venetians to surrender the Romagnole cities within twenty-four days, under pain of excommunication, interdict, and the like. He had previously, on April 19, invested Alfonso with the office of Gonfaloniere of the Church, and sent him the standard to Ferrara by Lodovico Pio (a cousin of Alberto). On the 26th, Monsignor Beltrando Costabili solemnly presented the banner to the Duke in the Duomo, and the people hailed the event with public rejoicings. In the meanwhile, King Louis with a large army had entered Italy and arrived at Milan.

Alfonso promptly went to Milan, with a brilliant cortège, to pay his respects to the Most Christian King, and, as an old ally of the royal House of France, to seek his approval for accepting the dignity that the Pope had conferred upon him. Louis, according to Guicciardini, was at first somewhat irritated, but finally accepted the Duke's explanations, and took him under his protection for the sum of thirty thousand ducats.¹ Alberto Pio, who had been one of the representatives sent by the Cardinal of Rouen from Cambrai to Caesar, and was now in high favour with the august allies, promptly seized the opportunity of making mischief, and informed the Pope that the Duke of Ferrara was making terms and alliance with France on his own account. Julius was infuriated at what he deemed a slight on the part of his vassal. 'He conceived so great indignation thereat,' writes the Duke's secretary, Bonaventura Pistofilo, 'that the love which he first bore to Duke Alfonso he began to change to hate, such that little by little he became his deadliest enemy, and so he remained as long as he lived.'² Alfonso returned after a few days to Ferrara, Ippolito shortly afterwards going up to Milan.

Ariosto appears to have been sent to Rome to concert measures with the Duke's friends in the city, how to appease the Pontiff. This was, possibly, not the first time that he had been thus employed.³ We do not know if he was actually admitted to the presence of Julius, but he promptly reported

¹ viii. 3.

² *Vita di Alfonso d'Este*, cap. xi. ; Rodi, *Annali*, ii. f. 83 v.

³ In Sanudo's *Diarii* (vii. col. 651), under October 19, 1508, it is reported from Ferrara that 'certain Ariosti have been sent to Rome.'

that the matter was serious unless the Duke himself came instantly to make his apologies; that the Pope's nature was excessively vindictive when once he took prejudice; and that 'every time that his Excellence goes to the King of France, he will have also to go to his Holiness to remove every suspicion that he may have conceived about that visit of his.'¹ However, the Duke did not go, and the matter seems to have dropped.

The crushing defeat of the armies of San Marco under Alviano and Pitigliano by those of the Most Christian King at the Ghiradadda, on May 14, 1509, brought Alfonso into the field. He had at first played a double part, and the Venetians appear to have hoped to win him over to their side. His orator at Venice, Francesco Lombardini, had assured the Doge that his master was a good son of the Republic, and had only met the King of France because he could not help himself. On May 16, Lombardini made a brave show of grief when he heard of the defeat of the Venetians, and the Doge professed himself quite convinced that the Duke would be very sorry. But the rejoicings with which the news was received at Ferrara soon undeceived them. The Ferrarese orator left Venice, and the Venetian Visdomino, Francesco Doro, was forced to retire from Ferrara, although the Duke professed reluctance and offered to lodge him in the Castello, if he was afraid to stay. Still Venice did not quite give up hope of Don Alfonso. The Senate even attempted to have him for captain of their forces, instead of the captured Alviano and the routed Pitigliano, if he could square matters with the Pope, and talked of purchasing his friendship with the voluntary surrender of Rovigo and the Polesine.² The Duke promptly undeceived them. He despatched cannon and other munition of war to the Duke of Urbino, who, with Count Lodovico Pico della Mirandola, was retaking the Romagnole cities without resistance; while, on May 29, he appeared in person before the walls of Rovigo. The gates of the city were opened; but the citadel made some show of resistance, until Alfonso planted twenty cannon before it, upon which it promptly surrendered. His artillery sank a

¹ Cappelli, p. xxxvii.

² Sanudo, viii. coll. 254, 297, 303.

number of Venetian ships on the Adige. All the rest of the Polesine fell into his hands, and, at the beginning of June, Antonio Costabili occupied Este, Montagnana, and Monselice, of which Maximilian had promised Alfonso the investiture. Cremona, Crema, Bergamo were in the hands of the French; Verona, Vicenza, and Padua had surrendered to the imperial agents; of the Venetian *terra ferma*, Treviso and Udine alone remained to the Most Serene Republic.

In July the tide turned. The Venetians retook Padua in the face of Maximilian, who had come to Bassano by the Valsugana, and set his headquarters at Marostica. A few days later, they crushed the Ferrarese guard at Este, and Battista Beltramo, whom Alfonso had made governor in Monselice, surrendered the place, paying for his treachery or pusillanimity with his life on his return to Ferrara. In August, the Venetians surprised and captured the Marquis of Mantua at the Isola della Scala near Legnago; on the receipt of which news the Holy Father burst out into marvellously unecclesiastical language, *in orrende bestemmie*. Cardinal Ippolito at once hastened to Mantua to aid Isabella in her arduous task, and had the little boy Federigo proclaimed successor, in case the Marquis should lose his life. The Marchesana appealed piteously to the King of France, to the Emperor, the Pope, even to the Turk, to obtain her husband's release, offering pictures by Lorenzo Costa, vessels of enamelled silver and the like; but, for the present, in vain.

Maximilian had at length assembled a sufficient army for the recapture of Padua, with aid from the French King and the Pope, the latter of whom tardily sent a force under Count Lodovico Pico, made up of Italian adventurers and exiles from every city, 'in such wise that it is deemed that this army should be the greatest that living man has ever seen in Christendom, or that has been known in Italy for many years.'¹ Venetian writers make it amount to eighty thousand men or more. They were a mingled host of Germans, French, Spanish and Italians. The Cardinal Ippolito joined the Emperor with the forces of the Duke of Ferrara—two hundred men-at-arms and two thousand Italian foot, with a

¹ Luigi da Porto, Letter xxvii.

full train of artillery. 'He goes through the camp upon a chariot like Darius,' writes Luigi da Porto, 'although armed and in military dress.' But Pitigliano, who commanded the Venetian defending army, together with the four Provveditori Generali (Cristoforo Moro, Pietro Marcello, Andrea Gritti, and Giampaolo Gradenigo), redeemed the credit that he had lost at the Ghiradadda. After more than a month's siege, the imperial army, at the beginning of October, was forced to withdraw from the walls of Padua. The Emperor, after selling the investiture of Este and Montagnana to Alfonso for forty thousand ducats, retreated to Verona and thence to Trento.

Ariosto had not accompanied the Cardinal in this campaign. He remained at Ferrara, watching all that went on, keeping his patron day by day acquainted with the news and rumours of the capital. Two of his letters written at this time to Ippolito are extant. In the one, he speaks of the failure of the Jew money-lender in Ferrara, Beniamino da Riva, and of the report that the Duke intends to seize upon the moneys of the Christian usurers. It is rumoured that he intends to demand a general loan, or even put a tax upon the Commune, of one hundred thousand ducats. In all the Ferrarese district there is an exceedingly poor vintage. There is great alarm in Adria and the other towns at the extremity of the Po and near the sea, lest the Venetian fleet may assail them and waste the country; some of the inhabitants have already taken houses in Ferrara in anticipation of a flight. For the rest, we gather that the poet has been rebuked for taking things too easily: 'From day to day I will be on the look-out, and will spare no effort to know what is going on, and I will keep more in touch with the piazza and the palace than I did after your Lordship's departure.'¹

In the second, he has called upon the Cardinal Cesarini at Nonantola, to pay his respects on behalf of Ippolito. He has been very graciously received; but, when the Cardinal expressed a desire to have a certain greyhound which belonged to Ippolito, and which the poet told him had already been given away, 'he saw with me there a pointer-bitch of mine own, which I held right dear for its beauty, and

¹ Letter ii., dated Ferrara, September 7, 1509.

because I wanted it for breeding purposes, and asked me to give it him. I could not refuse it to him, although the loss grieves me still.' In Ferrara things are going on badly. The new tax has been imposed by the Duke, and the Massari, or ducal stewards, have given orders that each citizen shall bring his portion to the treasurer of the Commune, 'just as if we were all bankers who had moneys in chests.' All the people, high and low alike, are murmuring bitterly. 'And I have heard it said that, if your Lordship were in this town, these things would not have happened; and that, after you have adjusted the business of the Duke with the King of France and with the Emperor, it will also be necessary for you to return to Ferrara to put the affairs of the people straight with the Duke.' Further, there has been a new tax upon the feudataries of the House of Este, which amounts to a fourth of their income. There have been tumults of the *contadini* against Antonio Costabili, the Judge of the Sages, complaining of the ever-increasing forced labour, and threatening to fly from Ferrarese territory; one of the surveyors of the dykes reports that three or four families have already fled from his district. It is rumoured that Costabili will be dismissed from his office at Christmas, and Benedetto Brugia put in his stead.¹

After the retreat of the imperialists from Padua, Andrea Gritti had easily retaken Vicenza. Desirous of avenging the excesses committed by the Ferrarese in the occupation of the Polesine, and especially exasperated at Alfonso's recent reception of the investiture of Este and Montagnana, the triumphant Venetians in November turned upon Ferrara by land and water. Giampaolo Gradenigo advanced into the Polesine and retook it all without resistance, Alfonso having recalled Guido Tassoni from Rovigo and all his other forces for the defence of Ferrara itself; Agostino Villa alone, who had taken formal possession of Montagnana in the Duke's name, heroically defended the place with seven hundred men, until the Venetian guns battered down his ramparts and he was forced to surrender. Simultaneously the Venetian fleet under

¹ Letter iii, dated Ferrara, October 22, 1509. Cardinal Cesarini had succeeded Giuliano della Rovere as Abbot of Nonantola on the latter's elevation to the Papacy.

Agnolo Trevisano, composed of twenty galleys and some three hundred smaller vessels, with a strong force of armed men, including a large contingent of semi-barbarous Slavonians, entered the Po by the Bocca delle Fornaci, burned Corbola and other places near the river, and then passed up towards Polesella, landing parties of light-armed troops, who ravaged all the country round, burning the buildings, slaughtering all whom they met and carrying off whatever they could find as booty. All the bank of the river was a desert; the survivors, ruined and terrified, fled as best they could towards Ferrara.

To meet this onslaught, Alfonso had small means at his disposal. Despatching urgent appeals for aid to Milan and Rome, he armed the nobles and the people of the duchy for defence. At Francolino his artillery checked the further advance of the Venetian ships. Trevisano took up his position in the middle of the Po, opposite Polesella, closed the river with a chain of trunks of trees, and began to build two bastions on the banks, one on the Venetian and one on the Ferrarese side, throwing across a bridge of boats to support the latter bastion and to enable the cavalry of the land-forces, when they arrived, to push their devastations into the heart of the duchy.

The Cardinal Ippolito—‘the most vigorous body with the fiercest mind that ever any one of his House had,’ writes Luigi da Porto—was the leading spirit in the campaign, and commanded the Ferrarese forces, that kept up an intermittent contest with the Venetian fleet and the strong bastion they had built on the side of the Po towards Ferrara. Lodovico Ariosto and the rest of his household accompanied him to the seat of war, and were well to the fore in the skirmishes with the Slavonian foragers. On the last day of November, too impatient to wait for the reinforcements, and anxious to hinder the completion of the fort, Ippolito ordered an assault, himself and his household leading. The Ferrarese were repulsed by the fire from the boats and bastion, but turned upon the pursuing Slavonians and drove them back in turn. Then was it that Ercole Cantelmo, son of Duke Sigismondo of Sora (who had been expelled from his duchy by the Spaniards, and was now attached to the Cardinal’s household), and Alessandro Ferruffino pursued the enemy right up to

their fort and boats. The former, 'a most excellent youth,' writes Luigi da Porto, 'and as skilled in every kind of arms as he was wondrously graceful and handsome in his person,' was carried too far by his horse, captured by the Slavonians, and brutally done to death in the sight of his father and all the Ferrarese army, who were powerless to aid him.

'Qual Hettorre et Enea sin dentro a i flutti,
Per abbruciar le navi greche, andaro,
Un' Hercol vidi e un' Alessandro, indutti
Da troppo ardir, partirsi a paro a paro,
E spronando i destrier, passarci tutti,
E i nemici turbar fin nel riparo,
E gir sì inanzi, ch' al secondo molto
Aspro fu il ritornare e al primo tolto.

' Salvossi il Ferruffin, restò il Cantelmo.
Che cor, Duca di Sora, che consiglio
Fu allhora il tuo, che trar vedesti l'elmo
Fra mille spade al generoso figlio,
E menar preso a nave, e sopra un schelmo
Troncargli il capo? Ben mi maraviglio
Che darti morte lo spettacol solo
Non potè, quanto il ferro a tuo figliuolo.'¹

The unhappy father could only buy back his murdered son's body from the barbarians, and bury it in San Francesco at Ferrara, in the tomb that may still be seen.

The Ferrarese had suffered heavily in this engagement, and they were now assailed in another direction. On December 4, another Venetian fleet under Marcantonio Contarini took and sacked Comacchio, destroying the salt-works, committing excesses of every kind. But, in the meanwhile, Chaumont had advanced towards Verona with the greater part of the French cavalry that were in the duchy of Milan, and was threatening

¹ 'As Hector and Aeneas went even into the waves to burn the Greek ships, I saw an Ercole and an Alessandro, impelled by too great daring, push forward together, and, spurring their steeds, outstrip us all, and assail the foe even in their fort, and advance so far, that return was right hard to the second and cut off from the first.

'Ferruffino saved himself, Cantelmo remained. What heart, what mind was then thine, Duke of Sora, who didst behold his helmet dragged off thy generous son among a thousand swords, and him led prisoner to a ship, and upon a block severed his head? Truly I marvel that the sight of it alone could not deal thee death, as the steel did to thy son' (*Orl. Fur.*, xxxvi. 6, 7). Cf. Luigi da Porto, Letter xxxviii.

Vicenza. This drew off the main body of the Venetian land-forces from the Polesine. Simultaneously a force of French lances under Châtillon, and the papalini formerly with the imperialists at Padua, arrived at Ferrara. These latter were still under the command of Lodovico Pico, 'a man right valiant in arms, but impious withal, who had wickedly deprived his brother, Giovanni Francesco, of his dominion and goods,'¹ and who was married to Francesca, a natural daughter of Trivulzio. Thus reinforced, Ippolito again took the offensive; but, in almost the first skirmish before the bastion, a shot from one of the Venetian ships carried off Count Lodovico's head, as he rode by the Cardinal's side.

Ariosto was instantly despatched to Rome to insist upon further reinforcements. He started at night, on December 16, for Bologna and narrowly escaped drowning on the way, for the heavy rains had swollen the Po to a portentous degree. He was absent for two months,² and, while he was in the Eternal City, the fortunes of the campaign were decided.

The heavy rains had swollen the Po to such an extent that in many places the Venetian ships were seen rising, as it were, above the dykes, visible to all the country round; but their commander, 'blinded by vain pride, attending only to speaking proudly and to acting cruelly, did not perceive the very great peril in which the rising of the waters had placed him.' Alfonso had received further reinforcements, and had in addition called the citizens of Ferrara to arms, three of the Ariosti being among those who obeyed the call. He now attempted to negotiate with the Venetian commander, more probably to lull him into false security than because he did not wish to offend the great Republic too much, as Luigi da Porto suggests. Messer Agnolo made great mock of his proposals and returned an insulting reply. On December 21, the Cardinal captured

¹ Sigismondo de' Conti, ii. p. 399. Gian Francesco and Lodovico were the sons of Galeotto Pico, Lord of Mirandola (elder brother of the famous scholar), and Margherita d'Este. Lodovico had ousted his brother some years before, with French and Ferrarese aid.

² On December 16, 1509, Bernardino Prosperi wrote to the Marchesana Isabella: 'Messer Lodovico Ariosto, the Cardinal's familiar, composer of comedies, has been sent to Rome, and Messer Teodosio Brugia, to ask for aid, as I am told.' On February 16, 1510, he announced his return: 'Messer Lodovico Ariosto has come from Rome with the advance of 5,000 ducats which the Pope is lending, as I am told.' Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 22, 23.

the great dykes opposite the Venetian fleet, still apparently without exciting any uneasiness in the enemy, who supposed that this was merely another attempt to check the ravages of the Slavonian wasters, and contented themselves with firing a few shots. At nightfall he brought up his artillery, pierced the earthworks, and planted the guns in a long extended line along them, so that the mouths were at the level of the water. The Duke had made a huge machine of boats, armed with his deadliest cannons, and he now brought it up to the Punta di Bondeno, without any rumour reaching the Venetians. It was an appalling death-trap in which the fleet of San Marco had let itself be taken. At dawn, on December 22, Ippolito's artillery opened a terrific fire upon the ships from his position behind the dykes, while Alfonso's deadly machine swept down upon them by the stream. Indescribable was the confusion, fearful the uproar—heightedened by the sudden explosion of one of the Venetian powder-ships. So distended was the line of guns along the dykes that the ships that fled merely met their fate lower down. Many were sunk, some burned up with their crews, others surrendered; under the heavy shower of darts and arrows, the soldiers and sailors who tried to save themselves by swimming perished miserably; many of those that reached the shore were done to death by the country people, in revenge for the cruelties that had been practised. Agnolo Trevisano at the beginning of the fight, seeing that all was lost, escaped in a small boat and saved the great banner; his galley fled for three miles, her crew making a desperate resistance, and at last went down. Two galleys and a number of smaller ships alone escaped, the former having been protected by their position behind one of the small islands of the Po. The rest were taken, burnt, or sunk; between two thousand and three thousand Venetians perished; the booty that remained in the hands of the victorious Ferrarese was immense. After a heavy bombardment, the bastion surrendered unconditionally, and all the Slavonians were put to the sword, to avenge the death of Ercole Cantelmo.

Thus ended the battle of La Polesella, after which, for a while, in Ariosto's words, *nè cavalli bisognar nè fanti*. There was a triumphant procession down the river on December 27, from the Punta di Bondeno to the Porta di San Paolo, the

captured vessels paraded covered with the spoils and bearing the victors, armed and crowned with laurel. Alfonso himself appeared upon the largest of the galleys, the *Marcella*, so called because built and fitted out at the expense of the Venetian family of that name; Ippolito, dressed in his cardinal's robes, came in a little boat, ostentatiously leaving all the honour to his brother. All the bells of the churches rang out, salvos of artillery mingled with martial music, when Alfonso reached the shore at San Paolo, where Lucrezia and all her ladies were waiting in carriages to receive him. At the gate the Duke mounted, and a solemn procession was formed to the Duomo, where ceremonious thanks were duly offered up. The beaks of the captured vessels, with other trophies, were hung up as votive-offerings in the Duomo and principal churches of the city. Some years later the majority were returned to the Venetians, but several of the rostra are still to be seen in Ferrara.

Immediately after the victory, Alfonso sent a force of three hundred horse and five hundred foot to attack the Venetians who had taken Comacchio. Loreo was burnt, but the Venetians retired without fighting. An attempt to push the success further and invade the Polesine failed; dissensions broke out between the French and Ferrarese, and the Venetians drove them back.

Needless to say, the victory of his patron did not go unsung by Ariosto; the great sea-fight between the rival fleets of the Paladin Dudone and King Agramante gives him his cue:—

‘Lungo sarebbe, se i diversi casi
Volessi dir di quel naval conflitto;
E raccontarlo a voi mi parria quasi,
Magnanimo figliuol d’Hercole invito,
Portar (come si dice) a Samo vasi,
Nottole a Athene e crocodili a Egitto:
Chè quanto per udità io ve ne parlo,
Signor, miraste e feste altrui mirarlo.

‘Hebbe lungo spettacolo il fedele
Vostro popul la notte e ’l dì che stette,
Come in theatro, l’inimiche vele
Mirando in Po tra ferro e fuoco astrette.

Che gridi udir si possano e querele,
 Ch'onde veder di sangue humano infette,
 Per quanti modi in tal pugna si muora,
 Vedeste, e a molti il dimostraste allhora.

‘Nol vide io già, ch'era sei giorni inanti,
 Mutando ogn' hora altre vetture, corso
 Con molta fretta e molta a i piedi santi
 Del gran Pastore, a domandar soccorso :
 Poi nè cavalli bisognar nè fanti ;
 Ch' in tanto al Leon d'or l'artiglio e 'l morso
 Fu da voi rotto sì, che più molesto
 Non l'ho sentito da quel giorno a questo.’¹

Ariosto was still in Rome when the news of the victory reached the Eternal City. Writing on Christmas Day to the Cardinal, he says : ‘Since I left Ferrara, it has rained perpetually, day and night ; and over here the waters of the rivers are above the banks, so that it is very perilous to start on a journey. For this reason, your Lordship will hold me excused if I should be a little late in returning ; for I should be unwilling to return with the perils of being drowned which I experienced in my coming here. To-day the news has arrived that your Lordship, together with the Duke, has defeated the Venetian armada on the Po, whereat in my opinion all this Court has rejoiced. I am glad at it, for, besides the public good, my Muse will have a history to paint in the pavilion of my Ruggiero to new praise of your Lordship.’²

It is clear that the *Orlando Furioso*, in its earlier shape, was

¹ ‘It would be long were I to relate the various chances of that naval conflict ; and to recount them to you, magnanimous son of victorious Ercole, would seem to me like carrying vases, as they say, to Samos, owls to Athens, and crocodiles to Egypt. For all that from hearsay I tell you of it, you saw, my Lord, and made others see.

‘A long spectacle your faithful people had the night and day they stood as in a theatre, gazing upon the enemy's sails on the Po hemmed in between steel and fire. What cries and laments can be heard, what waves seen tinged with human blood, and all the many modes of death in such a fight, you saw, and showed it then to many.

‘I, indeed, saw it not, for I had rushed six days before, changing conveyance every hour, with utmost haste to the holy feet of the great Shepherd to demand succour. Afterwards nor horse nor foot were needed ; for in the meanwhile you had so broken the claws and teeth of the golden Lion, that I have no more heard him dangerous from that day to this’ (*Orlando Furioso*, xl. 1-3).

² Letter iv., dated Rome, December 25, 1509.

nearing completion, or that, at least, the poet had the whole scheme of the poem clearly mapped out in his mind; the reference being to the last canto where, upon the magnificent pavilion in which Ruggiero and Bradamante are to be married, are figured the exploits of their descendant, Ippolito. Among the rest:—

‘Vedesi altrove da la patria riva
Pugnar incontra la più forte armata,
Che contra Turchi o contra gente Argiva
Da’ Venetiani mai fosse mandata :
La rompe e vince, et al fratel captiva
Con la gran preda l’ha tutta donata,
Nè per se vedi altro serbarsi lui,
Che l’honor sol, che non può dare altrui.’¹

For the present, however, Messer Lodovico was to have but little leisure to work out this or any other poetic fancy. He got safely back to Ferrara, in spite of the floods he so dreaded, on February 16, 1510, with a small sum of ducats lent by the Pope to Duke Alfonso—presumably before his Holiness had decided to emulate the political somersault of his uncle, Pope Sixtus, a quarter of a century before. The direst time that Ferrara had known since the Venetian war of that date was at hand, and it was heralded by the traditional admonitions from the tomb of the beatified nun of the Estensi, the Beata Beatrice, whose ghostly alarms and excursions had unnerved Duke Ercole when in arms for Florence against the Pope in 1479. In this year, writes the Annalist under 1510, ‘on the twelfth day of March, the day of St. Gregory, the blessed Beatrice was heard knocking in Sant’ Antonio, and many other times was she heard that year by several nuns, and especially when Modena and many castles were taken from the Duke, as will be told.’² But Alfonso was a man of sterner mould than his good father, and presumably heeded not these superstitious terrors, as long as his powder was dry and his wonderful artillery could still shoot forty shots a day.

¹ ‘In another place he is seen on his native shore, fighting against the strongest fleet that was ever sent by the Venetians against Turks or against the Greeks; he breaks it and conquers, and presents it all captive with the great booty to his brother. Nor for himself does he reserve anything, save the honour alone, which he cannot give to another’ (*Orlando Furioso*, xlv. 97).

² Rodi, *Annali*, MS. cit., f. 88.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRUGGLE WITH POPE JULIUS

A WEEK after Ariosto left Rome, a great scene was enacted in front of San Pietro which utterly changed the political situation. For some time the Venetians had been attempting to win the Sovereign Pontiff to their side. Julius himself, having recovered the cities of Romagna, and daily growing more estranged from France, lent a willing ear. The proud Republic conceded all that was demanded on the ecclesiastical side, touching the claims and jurisdiction of the Church; they withdrew their appeal from the papal monitorium; they granted free navigation in the Adriatic to all papal subjects, including the Ferrarese; they renounced the right to keep the Visdomino in Ferrara. They had held out long against these two latter articles, considering them, as Domenico Trevisano put it, *due cose molto disoneste*¹; but the Pope had insisted, 'not for any love that he then bore to Duke Alfonso, whom for the cause stated above he had by now begun to hate, but because he had already designed and was hoping to have the immediate dominion of Ferrara for himself.'² There was not a word in the treaty concerning Rovigo and the Polesine, which had been promised to the Duke before the war. On February 24, 1510, the Pope, enthroned in the portico of San Pietro, surrounded with his cardinals and prelates, solemnly absolved the Venetian ambassadors and received their Republic back into the bosom of the Church. The ceremony was carried out in such a way that Trevisano, one of the six ambassadors, could report to the Senate that the whole was a very honourable triumph for their State.³

¹ *Sommario della Relazione di Roma*, Alberi, *loc. cit.*, p. 29.

² Pistofilo, cap. xiii. Cf. Sigismondo de' Conti, ii. pp. 400-403.

³ *Relazione*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 29, 30.

The League of Cambrai was thus at an end, and Julius could proceed to his vaster plans for the expulsion of the French from Italy. He took the Venetians under his protection, and allowed them to hire the feudataries and subjects of the Church as condottieri. He opened negotiations with the Swiss, through Matthias Schinner, Bishop of Sion, whom he afterwards made a cardinal. The burghers were dissatisfied with the alliance with France, and readily promised the Pope fifteen thousand men. The first step proposed by his Holiness was the subjugation of Ferrara. Grievously had Ariosto mistaken the temper of the Curia. 'The Pope,' said Domenico Trevisano, 'hates the Duke of Ferrara, which he wants to have for the Church to close the Romagna; and he was glad that the Duke should suffer the damage that our government had inflicted upon him.'¹ The salt-works at Comacchio, from which Alfonso was supplying the French in Lombardy and which competed with the newly-recovered papal salt-works at Cervia, together with the Duke's persistence in carrying on the war with Venice in spite of the peace made by his suzerain, afforded a pretext. It is said that the Pope also demanded the liberation from prison of his godson, Don Ferrando d'Este, in accordance with an old promise which he alleged that Alfonso had made him.²

The French under Chaumont and the imperialists under the Count of Anhalt resumed hostilities in the spring. Alfonso in May, with two hundred men-at-arms, three hundred light cavalry, and two thousand infantry, with a full train of artillery, including the two famous pieces that he had cast himself, *Gran Diavolo* and *Terremoto*, joined forces with the French. La Badia was taken by assault; Rovigo and the rest of the Polesine were occupied with little resistance; Este and Montagnana surrendered. Vicenza was horribly sacked by Anhalt's Germans. Chaumont and Alfonso now proceeded to lay siege to Legnago.

The Duke had already some inkling of the ecclesiastical tempest that was about to burst upon him; but he was convinced that it would be a lesser evil to incur the wrath of the Pope than to lose the protection of France. We have a letter

¹ *Relazione*, loc. cit., p. 32.

² Cf. Luigi da Porto, Letter iv.

of his from the camp at Legnago, on the 1st day of June, to Ippolito at Ferrara—a letter characteristically blunt, but full of the writer's exultation in the day of battle and in the manual labours which he shared with his gunners, though he is clearly so worn out that he can hardly express himself coherently. Subject to Ippolito's approval, he suggests that the Pope should be told that the manufacture of the salt shall continue; but that, if it is clearly shown that the salt ought not to have been made, it shall all belong to the Pope. It would please him immensely if the Cardinal were to have an interview with the Legate (the Legate of Bologna, the famous 'Cardinal of Pavia,' Francesco Alidosi); and, if he can do it, the sooner the better. 'My Lord, I am stupefied by the cannons. If this letter of mine is confused and does not answer everything, your Lordship may supply as you think best. The cannons fire with the *Diavolo*; and, if I were not tired to death, I should never have been so happy. I have become a real cannoneer, and do my duty; our cannons fire splendidly, thirty-five to forty shots the day. Yesterday one of my cannoneers was killed; your Lordship does not know him. Twenty-six pieces of artillery have crossed the Adige; the rest are bombarding from the Porto side.'¹

The siege was still in progress when, on June 8, a papal messenger arrived at Ferrara from Cardinal Alidosi at Bologna. The Duke being absent, and Ippolito reported sick, the envoy delivered his message to the Judge of the Sages and the other magistrates assembled in the Duomo. In the name of the Pope, he bade Duke Alfonso, as vassal and Gonfaloniere of the Church, desist from molesting the Venetians, separate immediately from the French, make no more salt at Comacchio to the prejudice of the salt-works of Cervia, which had been won back for the Church. There were further complaints touching the new *gabelle* that the Duke had imposed upon goods from Bologna on their way to Venice by the Po.

Another event was adding fuel to the fire with which Pope

¹ Cappelli, Document 11; cf. Guicciardini, ix. 2, and *Le Loyal Serviteur*, chap. xl.: 'Cette place de Lignago se fist fort battre; aussi y avoit-il bonne artillerie, mesmement celle du duc de Ferrare, qui entre autres avoit une couleuvrine de vingt pieds de long, que les aventuriers nommoient le Grant Dyable.'

Julius was being consumed against the House of Este. Ippolito had always looked desirously upon the rich abbey of Nonantola, which had been destined for him by his father, but which he had been unable to get from Pope Sixtus IV. This February, 1510, Cardinal Cesarini died. Ippolito at once took possession of the abbey, and induced the monks to elect him Abbot. While Beltrando Costabili at Rome swore to the Pope that no compulsion or pressure had been put upon the chapter, Lodovico Ariosto was despatched post-haste by the Cardinal to allay the anger of his Holiness, and induce him to confirm the election.

Ariosto left Ferrara on May 20, and arrived in Rome on May 24. 'Yesterday,' wrote Monsignor Beltrando to Ippolito on the 25th, 'arrived Messer Lodovico Ariosto, and after dinner I introduced him to our Lord, to whom he set forth what had been committed to him very suitably; and it seemed that his Holiness accepted your most reverend Lordship's justification; but, as to giving you the abbey, he did not come to any further conclusion, as you will learn more fully from the letters of Messer Lodovico himself.'¹ These letters have been lost, but there was a party in the Curia opposed to any concession of this kind. Alberto Pio had come to Rome at the beginning of the year as an unofficial agent of the French King, and was intriguing against Alfonso. In the previous year, he had obtained from the King of the Romans a new investiture as sole lord of Carpi, with the title of Count and right of coining money—Giberto's cession of his share to the Duke of Ferrara being simultaneously declared null and void.² Maximilian's investitures were not taken very seriously in Italy, and Alberto was at once intriguing to get secure possession of his county, with the aid of Rome and France, and negotiating with Alfonso for a peaceable cession of the Ferrarese half of the fief. And it would seem that Ariosto was to carry out these delicate negotiations on the side of the House of Este. On June 12, Costabili wrote again to Cardinal Ippolito: 'I have spoken to Messer Lodovico Ariosto, and have fully informed him as to what he has to say to these Lord Cardinals

¹ Cappelli, p. xl.

² Maggi, *Memorie storiche*, p. 86; but cf. Guicciardini, viii. 5.

and to the Lord Alberto on behalf of your most reverend Lordship, about the things pertaining to the State as well as to the abbey of Nonantola, and I believe he is carrying out what he has to do satisfactorily.’¹ Ariosto seems to have returned to Ferrara, and to have instantly been sent back to Rome, starting from Ferrara on June 6 (as soon as he had arrived). But at Rome he found a change in the situation. The Pope had received information that the monks had suffered violence from the Cardinal, who had refused permission to the papal envoy to take an inventory of what belonged to the dead abbot. The Cardinal’s enemies, probably including Alberto Pio, confirmed the tidings. Julius threatened the Cardinal with legal proceedings, told Costabili that he was a perjurer, refused to listen either to him or Ariosto—though the former declared that his Holiness would find the Cardinal, now as always, his good servant, whoever might accuse him.² The abbey was given to Giovanni Matteo Sertorio, a favourite *cameriere segreto* of the Pope.

In fact, the time was hardly a propitious one for a member of the House of Este to demand favours from the Pope. Alfonso had vigorously aided the French in pressing the siege of Legnago, which surrendered on June 12, and its castello on the following day. Monselice was likewise taken. The Legate of Bologna having refused to receive his messengers, the Duke sent Count Carlo Ruini, a distinguished lawyer of Reggio (Bolognese by birth) and reader at the Ferrarese Studio, to the Pope.

On June 24, Ruini with Beltrando Costabili was admitted to the Pope’s presence. He assured his Holiness that his master had never spoken injuriously of him, and that he was most anxious to come in person to Rome to give a full explanation of all his actions. The House of Este was in full possession of its rights in making salt; but the Duke would not quarrel with the Holy See upon this question, in the hope that the Holy Father would listen to his reasons and act justly by him. Then the Pope suddenly burst out, and said

¹ Campori, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

² Letter from B. Costabili to the Cardinal Ippolito, June 10, 1510. Cappelli, Document 6.

that this was not true, that the league with France had been renewed chiefly to secure this manufacture of salt, and that the Duke had appealed to the French Parliament in this matter, in defiance of the Holy See. The Duke had always shown an evil disposition towards him even in his words—though he heeded them not—and he was a tyrant in his own States; he had murdered Ercole Strozzi and a rich priest; he had coined false money. He, the Pope, was resolved to deprive Alfonso formally of his fief, and to send soldiers to destroy the salt-works at Comacchio; let the French take arms to help him if they dared.¹

On St. Peter's day, the Pope refused to accept the payment of the tribute, presented for the fief of Ferrara according to the investiture of Alexander VI.—which, as we have seen, Julius from the outset of his pontificate had only accepted under protest.² This was equivalent to a declaration of war. But, in spite of the intrigues of Alberto Pio, whose hatred of the House of Este appears to have swayed his conduct more than his duty to the sovereign whom he represented at the Vatican, the French King refused to accede to the papal demands and to renounce the protectorate of Ferrara. But with Genoa threatened by the papal army under Marcantonio Colonna, and the Swiss preparing to assail the duchy of Milan, Alfonso could not hope for more than scanty aid from his ally.

At the beginning of July, the papal troops opened hostilities in Romagna. Alfonso had left the French camp, and ordered that the salt-works should cease, and that Cento and Pieve should be surrendered. A few weeks later, the Duke of Urbino with the papal army entered the Ferrarese Romagna, easily capturing Massalombarda, Conselice, Bagnacavallo, and Lugo—the citadel of the latter place holding out gallantly for nearly a month under Cesare Lavezzuolo. The Venetians, simultaneously assuming the offensive, retook Vicenza, and won back all they had lost in the Polesine of Rovigo. On August 9, the Pope published a bull of excommunication and deprivation against Duke Alfonso, anathematising all his

¹ Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-33.

² Cf. *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara*, p. 444.

adherents and supporters, subjecting all the duchy of Ferrara to the interdict.¹ In the preceding month he had prevailed upon the Venetians to release the Marquis of Mantua, and had appointed him Gonfaloniere of the Church in the Duke's stead.

We lose sight of Ariosto's movements during June and July, as an entry in the Cardinal's *Libro d'entrare e spese* seems to imply that the poet did not return to Ferrara from Rome.² Presumably he was employed in his patron's service elsewhere. At the beginning of August, the Pope summoned Ippolito to Rome within fifteen days, under pain of deprivation of the cardinalate and forfeiture of his ecclesiastical goods. The Cardinal, as a prince of the Church, was forced to make a show of compliance. He went to Modena, ostensibly on his way, whence he started for Massa, writing first to Beltrando Costabili at Florence to hire him a house for fifteen days in that city, and sending Ariosto before him to Rome to crave from his Holiness a prolongation of the term, on account of his old malady in the leg, and a safe-conduct: 'For I fear,' he wrote, 'lest the indignation that his Holiness has conceived against my House, as he shows it manifestly by having made war upon it, should redound also against myself, especially seeing that in time past malignant men have slandered me before his Beatitude, and my justifications have never been accepted by him.'³

The interdict lay over Modena, because of the presence of certain followers of the Bentivogli in the city. Mass was allowed on the feast of the Assumption, but the Bishop would permit no Communion to be given.⁴ On the following Sunday, the news came that the Duke of Urbino and Cardinal Alidosi were at Castelfranco. A panic ensued; the gates were blocked with flying contadini and their goods, 'and so great an uproar was there in Modena that it seemed that the enemy were at the gates.' The bell was still ringing to summon the Sages to council, when Gian Filippo Bentivoglio of Sassoferrato, commissary of the Pope, appeared with two trumpeters and

¹ In Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, xi. pp. 551-553.

² Campori, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

³ Letter dated Massa, August 31, 1510. Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-30.

⁴ Tomasino de' Bianchi, *Cronaca Modenese*, i. p. 87.

a small troop of horsemen at the Porta Salexe. Introduced to the council, he demanded the surrender of Modena, in the name of the Cardinal of Pavia and as commissary of the Pope. To the protest that it was under the jurisdiction of the Empire and a request for delay, he answered by threatening to sack the city. The ducal governor, Ercole di Sigismondo d'Este, was ill; there were no soldiers or artillery; the Conservatori decided to surrender, with a solemn protest 'that, with this compulsory cession, they did not intend to do any act of rebellion against the Duke.' The factious family of the Rangoni, headed by Count Gherardo and Messer Francesco Maria, acclaimed the papal authorities; the gates were thrown open; Alidosi and the Duke of Urbino entered in triumph with their cavalry, while the fickle populace cheered for Pope Julius and the Church.¹ The interdict was taken off, a number of taxes and duties abolished, every means being taken to win the Modenese to the papal side. Carpi and Soliera and the whole of the Modenese district followed suit. On August 20, in Modena, the second city of Alfonso's dominions, the papal bull of excommunication against him was published in the Duomo and solemnly read aloud from the balcony of the Palace of the Commune.²

In the meanwhile, Ariosto had safely arrived at Rome. He at once went to the Castello Sant' Angelo and demanded an audience. His Holiness was about to breakfast, but postponed his meal and had the poet ushered in. At this time, Julius had not acquired that shaggy, lion-like appearance in which Raphael has eternalised him; but even beardless, as in Dürer's rosary picture and on Francia's medal, with his slightly bulbous nose, coarse features, and eyes that still seemed to flash with the fire of youth, he was a sufficiently formidable spectacle, nor was he a man who liked to be interrupted at his meals. When Ariosto knelt and presented the Cardinal's letter of introduction, the Pope first asked him where his most reverend Lordship was, and how he was. The poet

¹ T. de' Bianchi, i. pp. 88, 89; Sandonnini, *Modena sotto il governo de' Papi*, pp. 10, 11 and Document 1.

² T. de' Bianchi, i. pp. 89, 90. The papal standpoint was that Modena and Reggio belonged to the Holy See as having formed part of the Exarchate of Ravenna.

answered that he had left him at Modena and that he was on his way. This was dutiful, so the Pope opened the letter and asked what the envoy had to say. Ariosto asked in the Cardinal's name for an extension of the time given in the papal brief so that he could conveniently come to Rome, urging his patron's bad leg and the intense heat. 'That does not matter to me,' growled the Pontiff. 'Well, Holy Father,' said the poet, 'why should the Cardinal split himself by coming, without considering his infirmity nor sparing any fatigue and discomfort, if then, when he is here and the time is past that you have granted him, he has gained nothing and your Holiness is not satisfied with his most reverend Lordship?'

Julius took this boldness in good part. 'We do not choose to give him any further extension of time in writing,' he answered; 'but we tell him and pledge our word that, if his Lordship wishes to come and if we have proof that he is really coming, we shall extend the time by ten or fifteen days, according to his own wishes.' And nothing more could be got from him. As to the safe-conduct, Ariosto said that the Cardinal did not demand it because he was not conscious of his own innocence and ability to clear himself from all accusations, or because he mistrusted the Pope's clemency; but because every one dissuaded him from coming to Rome, on the grounds that his Beatitude intended to imprison him, and also because the Pope gave ear readily to his enemies (and would continue to do so, even if he justified himself), and showed that he not only was enraged against the Duke, his brother, but hated all the House of Este. 'Let his Lordship come freely,' said Julius, 'and let him fear nothing'; but he would give no other safe-conduct than his word.

The conclusion is wanting to the letter from which this account is taken,¹ so we do not know how the interview ended. But when, almost simultaneously, another envoy from Ippolito—Lodovico da Fabriano—arrived with a similar request, the Pope in a sudden burst of fury ordered his attendant who brought the letters to be hanged; but fortunately recovered his self-control in time to make amends by giving the man ten

¹ Letter from Benedetto Fantino at Florence to Gherardo Saraceni at Ferrara. Cappelli, Document 7.

ducats. Ariosto's friend, the Cardinal's favourite, Lodovico da Bagno, coming on the same errand, was unceremoniously sent about his business.¹

Ariosto rejoined the Cardinal in Florence, only to be sent back to Rome on August 19, to beseech the Pope that, if he would not grant a safe-conduct, he would at least not force Ippolito to go to him. It was then that he experienced that *grande ira di Secondo* which he was to eternalise in the Satire. 'This gentleman of mine,' wrote Ippolito to another Cardinal, 'not only could not obtain any grace or conclusion from him, but his Holiness threatened to have him thrown into the river, if he did not leave his presence, and to do the like to any other of my people who should come before him, adding that, if I did not go to Rome, he would deprive me of my benefices and of the hat.'² Ippolito goes on to say that, the Sienese having refused him a safe-conduct and the Florentines only given him one that they can revoke at their pleasure, hearing that the Excellence of the Duke, his brother, is losing some town every day, he has decided to escape into Lombardy; he beseeches the Cardinal to defend his cause in Rome, if the Pope should actually attempt to deprive him, 'the which I cannot believe, since neither his Holiness nor the Sacred College have just cause to do it, as I have done nothing to deserve it.'

The Cardinal, who had been injured by a fall of his horse, obtained leave to remain a little longer with his household at Florence. But, about the middle of September, for fear of being involved in the intrigues of the discontented Cardinals of the French faction, who were in Tuscany preparing the anti-papal council of Pisa, he moved to Parma—with the warm approbation of the Cardinal Legate of Bologna, Alidosi, who deemed it the most likely way to regain the favour of the Pope. At Parma, while ostensibly keeping aloof from his brother's affairs, Ippolito was in constant touch with the Duke

¹ Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 27.

² In this letter (Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-30), addressed to an anonymous Cardinal and dated Massa, August 31, 1510, Ippolito does not name Ariosto; but we may assume that he is the gentleman in question from the note left by Virginio Ariosti, albeit the latter speaks of the sea: 'Di Papa Giulio, che lo volse far trarre in mare.'

at Ferrara and with Chaumont at Milan—Ariosto continually passing to and fro between him and the former with letters in cipher. Julius himself came to Bologna with his army, to organise the attack upon Ferrara and the French, while the Venetian ships, in two divisions, entered the Po by the Fornaci and the Porto di Primaro.

The bulk of the French army had at first retired into the Milanese to resist the expected Swiss invasion, which did not come; but, in answer to Alfonso's appeal for protection, Chaumont sent a small force of French and Swiss infantry to Ferrara, and with them *le bon chevalier*, Bayard, who was a host in himself.¹ The papalini on one side, the Venetians on the other, did little more than plunder and ravage, without approaching Ferrara itself. The Ferrarese gentlemen had armed themselves on behalf of their Duke, and Ariosto enrolled himself in the troop commanded by Enea Pio. In a sharp fight on the Po in which the French and Ferrarese, under Alfonso's personal command, routed the Venetian fleet, sinking and taking a number of their vessels, Ariosto took part and is said himself to have shared in capturing one of the enemy's ships. This was probably in the second battle at the Polesella, on September 24, of which we have a brief account in a letter from Alfonso to the Cardinal at Parma.²

At the end of October, the two armies practically faced each other, Chaumont and the French lying at Rubiera and Carpi, the Duke of Urbino concentrating at Modena the ecclesiastical army intended for the conquest of Ferrara. We find Ariosto, still apparently in Enea Pio's troop, at Reggio, writing letters to the Cardinal at Parma concerning the movements of the ecclesiastical forces, who were making foraging excursions, threatening the Reggian district, and skirmishing with the French garrison.

The poet was likewise engaged in some mysterious communications on the Cardinal's behalf, probably in connection with the proposed cession of the Estensian half of Carpi, with

¹ Cf. *Le Loyal Serviteur*, chap. xl.

² Cappelli, Document 9; cf. Pigna, *I Romanzi*, pp. 75, 76. The poet himself makes but a slight, ironical reference to his brief military career, in *Carm.* i. 11.

Alberto Pio, who had retaken the place with French aid. 'When I was yesterday at Reggio,' he writes towards the end of the month, 'I heard that the Lord Alberto was at Carpi; and when I intended to go to find him, I was warned that the ecclesiastical Stradiots had foraged to Correggio and had taken a son of the Lord Borso, and that they had also advanced to San Martino by the two ways by which one goes to Carpi. And for this I at once sent expressly a man on foot with a letter to the Lord Alberto, advising his Lordship that I have to speak to him on a most important concern of his, that same matter about which we had often discoursed together at Rome. I have not named your Lordship in the letter, and I have prayed him to choose what place he thinks fit where I could speak to him without danger; and, if it cannot be done otherwise, to send me a trusted man of his that I know, with credentials from him.' And, in another letter, Ariosto fears that his messenger has been captured, 'which is not so bad for me as it would have been if I had been taken in his place.' The enemy have penetrated to a mile from Reggio on the Carpi road, and are carrying off cattle, but have been intercepted by the French and some thirty of them made prisoners. 'While I write, I am told that Messer Sigismondo de' Santi, secretary of the Lord Alberto da Carpi, has come, and I have gone to speak with him. And from him I have learned that, after he has spoken with the grand Master,¹ he has commission to come to your Lordship. I have asked him if it is for our business, and he has told me that it is, and for the same cause for which I was sent to him; wherefore we shall come tomorrow morning. He, according to what he has told me, has his Lord's final decision upon the matter.'²

Thus Ariosto could now only meet the old friend and associate of his youth, his once beloved fellow-student, in an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion. Much water had indeed flowed under the bridges since the days of his ode, *Alberte proles inclita Caesarum*. This was undoubtedly the date of the rupture between them, of which Virginio Ariosti was to

¹ Chaumont.

² Letters vii. and viii., dated October 29 and 30, respectively, 1510, from Ariosto at Reggio to Cardinal Ippolito at Parma.



ALBERTO PIO. COUNT OF CARPI.

*By Baldassare Peruzzi.
(Collection of Dr. Ludwig Mond.)*

have written.¹ Whether the poet and his former friend's representative met the Cardinal at Parma, as the above words seem to show they meant to do, we do not know. But Alberto's irreconcilably hostile disposition towards the House of Este was by this time manifest to all; he preferred to receive Carpi as an enemy of the Duke of Ferrara from the hands of the conqueror than by a pacific arrangement; and Messer Lodovico chose to keep his sovereign rather than his friend. Alberto passed to and fro, in the coming winter, between Chaumont and the Pope, ostensibly labouring in the cause of peace; but Guicciardini tells us that men suspected him more and more, and that it is doubtful whether he was acting sincerely.

The Pope was now furiously bent upon the reduction of Ferrara, where tremendous preparations were being made for the defence. All the shops were shut. Artisans and gentlemen laboured together with priests and friars on the ramparts; ladies of the city, and even the public courtesans, joined in the work. The Duke himself passed to and fro among them, bearing his share like an ordinary labourer, and at nightfall leading the workmen off to the beating of drums to eat and drink together at his expense.² Federigo Gonzaga of Bozzolo forced his way through the papal troops with some thousand Italian foot-soldiers, and was warmly welcomed. But the papalini had first to occupy Mirandola, which was regarded as the key of the position, and which was held by the Countess Francesca, the worthy daughter of Trivulzio and widow of Lodovico Pico, and her cousin, Alessandro Trivulzio, who answered the papal summons to surrender with a defiance. When the Duke of Urbino advanced with the papal army to besiege the place, Alfonso sent artillery and men to Francesca's aid. 'My children,' said Bayard, *le bon chevalier sans paour et sans reprouche*, to the young French knights who accompanied the Ferrarese force, 'you are going to the service of ladies; show yourselves gentle companions to acquire their favour, and act so as to win renown.' The siege lagged, and at the beginning of the new year, 1511, the Pope set out in

¹ 'Dell' amicizia col Signor Alberto da Carpi . . . e la causa che dismise l'amicizia.'

² Rodi, MS. *cit.*, f. 95.

person from Bologna to superintend the assault. Between San Felice and Mirandola, Bayard with a hundred men-at-arms lay in ambush to take him. Julius had already started in his litter from San Felice, when a violent snowstorm came on, and Alidosi, who with two other cardinals accompanied him, advised him to turn back. Hardly had he got to the gate of the castle, when the rest of the papal party who had gone on in advance came rushing back madly through the storm in headlong flight, with the Good Knight and his merry men at their heels. The Pope leapt from his litter and himself helped to raise the drawbridge, 'which was the act of a wise man, for, if he had waited while you could say a *pater noster*, he would have been nicked.'¹ The Duke of Urbino had to come in person to conduct him to the field of action.

Before Mirandola the Pope, dressed in an amazing medley of pontifical robes and the attire of a trooper, went about under fire, directing the artillery, regardless of danger. It was a bitter winter, the snow lay thickly on the ground, the ice in the moat was so thick that even the artillery could not break it; but the fiery-hearted old man heeded it no more than he did the cannon-shot that fell round him. Chaumont, bitterly jealous of the fame of Francesca's father, sent no aid; and at length, a breach having been made, the place capitulated on January 21. Too disdainful to enter through the gate, Julius had a bridge thrown across the moat and was drawn up in a box through the breach. Giovanni Francesco Pico, Lodovico's elder brother, was reinstated as lord of Mirandola, and Francesca allowed to depart in safety with all her property, 'threatening the Pope (who insisted on accompanying her out of the town) that she would have her place back again, and that she would never have left it, for so small a war, if she had had enough victuals and ammunition. These disdainful and daring words afforded Julius the greatest pleasure in the world, and he paid her back in kind with delight.'²

But the Pope's triumph was brief. The death of Chaumont in February had opened the way for the far more capable

¹ *Le Loyal Serviteur*, chap. xlii., xliii.

² Luigi da Porto, Letter iv. Cf. Guicciardini, ix. 4, and *Le Loyal Serviteur*, chap. xliii.

veteran Trivulzio once more to assume command of the French army. In May, he drove the Duke of Urbino and Alidosi from Bologna, and replaced the Bentivogli—the Pope having previously fled to Ravenna. The Bolognese, led by a Lorenzo degli Ariosti, had risen against the Legate on the approach of the French and welcomed back their old rulers; they now dashed down Michelangelo's noble bronze statue of Pope Julius from the façade of San Petronio, and sold its fragments to Duke Alfonso to convert into a cannon. The latter, with the aid of Bayard, had cut to pieces a papal force that had attempted to capture the Bastia del Zaniolo; he now speedily reoccupied Cento and Pieve, Cottignola, Lugo, and the other Ferrarese towns in Romagna, and drove Alberto Pio out of Carpi. Against Modena, however, he could attempt nothing, as Julius at the beginning of the year had practically sold the city to the Emperor Maximilian, whose commissary, Vitfurst, had taken possession at the beginning of February as Caesarian governor. A sordid and ghastly tragedy completed the papal discomfiture. Mad with bestial fury at his disgrace, the Duke of Urbino stabbed Cardinal Alidosi to death with his own hands in the streets of Ravenna, and men of usually serene judgment were found to applaud this butchery of a papal favourite by a papal nephew as an act of divine judgment upon a traitor.

But in the autumn the indomitable Pontiff rose up from what had seemed his deathbed, with renewed strength and fire, to crush the schismatical Council of Pisa and to prepare to renew the war. In October, he proclaimed the Holy League with Venice and Spain; he had already, in July, summoned a General Council to meet at the Lateran in the following year. But stiff-necked Ferrara and rebellious Bologna were first to be humbled.

Alfonso had practically been left in peace during this summer and autumn. Several papal agents had, however, been captured in the city and hanged; the Duke suspected some of his own nobles of being in treaty with the Pope, and put several, including Borso Calcagnino, under arrest. Julius then appears to have attempted to negotiate directly with Alfonso, and sent a certain Agostino Guerlo of Lodi (who was afterwards executed by Aubigny at Brescia) to Ferrara, to make great offers to the Duke if he would break with the

French. Alfonso revealed the whole thing to Bayard, who professed his conviction that his companions and himself were as safe in Ferrara as in Paris. It then occurred to the Duke to make use of the papal agent to pay the Pope back in coin worse than his own; the matter was concluded then and there, the man undertaking to rid Alfonso of the Pope within a week, the Duke promising two thousand ducats down and an income of five hundred ducats. Let the *Loyal Serviteur* describe the dramatic scene that followed:—

‘The Duke left Messer Agostino in his room, and returned to the Good Knight, who was at the battlements on the ramparts of the town and amusing himself by having an embrasure cleared. He saw the Duke coming and went to meet him; they took each other by the hand, and, while they walked together on the ramparts apart from every one, the Duke began to say: “My Lord of Bayard, it never befell otherwise than that deceivers were themselves deceived at the end. You have heard the villainy that the Pope wished me to do towards you and the French who are here; and for this purpose he has sent me a man, as you know. I have so gained him over and changed his intention that he will deal with the Pope as he wished to deal with you, for, within eight days at the latest, he has assured me that he will no longer be alive.” The Good Knight, who had never imagined such a thing, replied: “How so, my Lord, has he then spoken with God?” “Never mind,” said the Duke, “but it will be so.” And then, as they talked on, he told him that Messer Agostino had promised him to poison the Pope. At these words the Good Knight crossed himself more than ten times, and, gazing upon the Duke, said to him: “Ah, my Lord, never would I have believed that so noble a prince as you are would have consented to so great a treason; and, if I knew it to be true, I swear to you upon my soul that, before nightfall, I would warn the Pope, for I believe that God would never pardon a crime so horrible.” “How,” said the Duke, “he wanted to do as much to you and to me; and you know that we have had seven or eight of his spies hanged.” “I reckon not of that,” said the Good Knight; “he is the lieutenant of God on earth, and never shall I consent to let him die in such a fashion.” The Duke shrugged his shoulders, and, as he spat upon the

ground, said these words : " By the Body of God, my Lord of Bayard, I would that I had slain all my enemies while I did that ; but, since you do not find it good, the thing shall stop ; nevertheless, if God does not give a remedy, you and I shall repent it." " That will be as God pleases," said the Good Knight ; " but I pray you, my Lord, hand me over the gallant who wished to do this masterpiece, and if I do not have him hanged within an hour, may I be so in his stead." " No, my Lord of Bayard," said the Duke, " I have guaranteed him his personal safety, and I shall send him back." ¹

In the autumn, Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici was nominated Legate of Bologna by the Pope, although that city was no longer in the power of the Church. Ariosto, presumably on the occasion of his visits to Rome, had contracted what he fondly imagined was a genuine friendship with the Cardinal. ' When I heard some days ago,' he writes to him, ' that your most reverend Lordship had received the legation of Bologna, I was as glad thereat as I should have been if my patron, the Cardinal of Este, had been made legate.' And he proceeds to ask him for a bull, in his capacity of legate, to enable him to hold several ecclesiastical benefices simultaneously, and to dispense him from taking priest's orders for as long a time as the dispensation could be conceded. This was probably with reference to two benefices which Cardinal Ippolito had given him in the diocese of Modena—Castello S. Felice and S. Maria in Benedellio—both of which, being rectories, brought with them to the holder the obligation of taking priest's orders within a year, unless he had a special dispensation. An old priest, a dear friend of Ariosto's, Giovanni Fusari, whom we shall meet again, was the bearer of the letter to the Legate, with whom he had probably business of his own to transact. ' The Archpriest of Santa Agata, the present bearer, whom I hold as a father and love much for his merits, will come to your Lordship for this purpose. He will see to having the supplication made for what I ask. I beg your most reverend Lordship to have it despatched gratis. You must pardon me if I speak to you too arrogantly ; for my affection and devotion towards you, and the memory that I have of the offers that

¹ *Le Loyal Serviteur*, chap. xlv.

you have many times made me, would give me daring to ask much greater things of you than these (albeit these will seem very great to me) and certitude of obtaining them from your Lordship.' ¹

Towards the end of this year, 1511, the Spanish and papal army, destined for the recovery of Bologna and the conquest of Ferrara, entered Romagna under the supreme command of the captain-general of the Holy League, the Viceroy Cardona. The towns across the Po belonging to the Duke of Ferrara at once surrendered, except the Bastia del Zaniolo—which commanded the passage of the river, and, after a heroic resistance, was stormed by the Spanish infantry under Pedro Navarro, the whole little garrison with their captain, Vestidello, being put to the sword. Hardly had the Spanish army passed on, leaving a garrison behind it, when Alfonso in person with his French companions and his artillery appeared upon the scenes, and subjected the place to a furious bombardment, in the course of which a stone from the wall, loosened by the firing of his own guns, rebounded and struck him on the forehead, stretching him senseless on the ground. The Duke's good helmet saved him from worse injury; but his soldiers, furious at seeing him fall, pressed home the assault, carried the place by storm, and cut to pieces every Spanish soldier within, save one whom they brutally mutilated and sent on to tell the news to his fellows at the walls of Bologna. 'The Bastia,' writes Pistofilo, 'was recovered in exactly as many hours as the Spaniards had spent days in taking it; which brought very great consolation and pleasure to the said Duke Alfonso, who thereafter was healed in a few days, and remained with a perpetual and very noticeable scar upon his honoured forehead.' ²

But greater military events were in progress elsewhere. Gaston de Foix, youngest and not the least barbarous of great generals, leading the fresh armies of the Most Christian King, in the space of two crowded and sanguinary February weeks,

¹ Letter ix., dated Ferrara, November 25, 1511. In spite of the usual interpretation of this letter, the words of the second Satire seem to me to show that the benefice referred to here is not that of Santa Agata. Cf. below, Chapter v.

² *Vita di Alfonso d'Este*, cap. xxiv., xxv.; Guicciardini, x. 3; Rodi, MS. cit., ff. 99, 99 v. Cf. Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.*, iii. 54, xlii. 3-5.

had relieved Bologna, taken Brescia by storm, defeated one Venetian force and practically annihilated another. At his advance southwards, the army of the Confederates retreated to Imola. With new reinforcements from France, joined by the Duke of Ferrara with all his admirable artillery, and by the Cardinal of San Severino, fierce, warlike, and gigantic, legate in the name of the Council of Pisa against the Pope, Gaston was now prepared to force on a pitched and decisive battle with the powers of Rome and Spain, before the English should assail France or the fickle Caesar withdraw his German infantry from the royal army.

On Easter Sunday, April 11, 1512, was fought the battle of Ravenna; the bloodiest and most terrible that Italy had seen since the overthrow of Totila and the Goths. Four thousand French and at least ten thousand of the Confederates died upon the field. All the chief papal and Spanish captains were taken prisoners, including the Marquis of Pescara and the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, who had accompanied the Confederate army as papal legate, bearing the cross of Rome against the cross of Pisa of the Cardinal of San Severino. Fabrizio Colonna, wounded and defending himself desperately against a band of French soldiers, had surrendered to the Duke of Ferrara in person. The Spanish infantry effected their retreat in perfect order, while Gaston de Foix, hurling himself with the chivalry of France upon their serried pikes, had fallen in the hour of victory. The Viceroy Cardona had fled from the field. The scythed chariots of Pedro Navarro, with their huge spears and arquebuses, had proved of little service in spite of their superior mobility; while Duke Alfonso's terrible Ferrarese artillery had been one of the chief factors in deciding the victory for France. 'It was a horrible and terrible thing,' wrote Jacopo Guicciardini to his brother Francesco, 'to see how every shot of the artillery made a lane through those men-at-arms, and how helmets with the heads inside them, scattered limbs, halves of men, in vast quantity, were sent flying through the air.'¹

¹ In Guicciardini, *Opere Inedite*, vol. vi. p. 39. So greatly had the use of artillery been developed since the battle of Fornovo, in July, 1495, when, according to Commynes (*Mémoires*, viii. 6), the artillery on both sides did not kill ten men: 'Je ne crois point que l'artillerie des deux costés tuast dix hommes.'

At one point in the conflict, before the issue was well decided, Frenchmen and Spaniards, mingled together in the mêlée, had been mowed down indiscriminately by the Ferrarese artillery. It was stated that Alfonso, in a sudden access of Italian enthusiasm, had ordered his gunners to fire recklessly upon them: 'You cannot make a mistake, they are all our enemies.' But, after the event, in conversation with Paolo Giovio, the Duke solemnly denied that he had ever said anything of the kind.¹ To Ariosto, the part played by Alfonso in winning the great victory for his French allies was hardly more glorious than his having 'preserved her Fabrizio to Rome.' Fabrizio Colonna was treated as an honoured guest rather than as a captive, and Alfonso steadfastly refused to surrender him to the French, even when the King himself sent expressly to demand him as his prisoner. In the appalling sack of Ravenna that followed the battle, Alfonso did his utmost to restrain the atrocities and excesses of the French soldiery; but, getting no support from their captains, he returned with his troops to Ferrara.

' Bisogna che proveggia il Re Luigi
Di nuovi capitani alle sue squadre,
Che per honor de l'aurea Fiordaligi
Castighino le man rapaci e ladre,
Che suore e frati, e bianchi e neri e bigi,
Violato hanno, e sposa e figlia e madre ;
Gittato in terra Christo in sacramento,
Per togli un tabernaculo d'argento.

' O misera Ravenna, t'era meglio
Ch' al vincitor non fessi resistenza ;
Far ch' a te fosse inanzi Brescia specchio,
Che tu lo fossi a Arimino e a Faenza.
Manda, Luigi, il buon Traulcio veglio,
Ch' insegni a questi tuoi più continenza
E conti lor quanti per simil torti
Stati ne sian per tutta Italia morti.'²

¹ Giovio, *Vita di Alfonso*, pp. 83, 84. For what may be called the romance of Alfonso at the battle of Ravenna, cf. Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.*, xiv. 1-7; Giraldi, *Ecatommisti*, vi. 2.

² 'Needs must King Louis provide fresh captains for his bands, who, for the honour of the golden lilies, shall chastise the rapacious and plundering hands that have violated nuns and friars of every rule, wives, daughters,

Never was great victory so barren of results as that of Ravenna. The loss of Gaston de Foix and so many of their noblest captains paralysed the French. In May, the Swiss—eighteen thousand strong under the warlike Cardinal Schinner—arrived at Verona, enthusiastic for the cause of the Pope, lusting for the spoils of Italy. On their advent the armies of the Most Christian King melted away, 'like mist flying before the wind,' as Francesco Vettori put it. In June, Pavia surrendered to the Swiss; Genoa declared herself independent; the Duke of Urbino occupied Bologna, which was promptly reconciled to the Holy See; Parma and Piacenza followed suit; Milan received a papal lieutenant; and, by the end of the month, the French had crossed the Alps. The Swiss, as Julius said, had shown themselves the best doctors for the *mal francese*, and he bestowed upon them the perpetual title of Protectors of the Liberty of the Church.

The state of the Italian allies of France—the Duke of Ferrara and the Republic of Florence—was now desperate. In answer to Alfonso's appeal, King Louis wrote that he could give him no immediate assistance, as he had the whole world against him, and that he had better make what terms he could with the Pope for the present. Fabrizio Colonna, chivalrously anxious to repay the Duke's kindness, urged him to submit; Alfonso saw no help for it, and, through the intercession of the Marquis of Mantua and Isabella, he obtained a safe-conduct from the Pope to enable him to go in person to Rome to crave pardon of his Holiness. But Julius made no secret of his intentions. 'I intend to take Ferrara from him,' he said to the Venetian orator; 'and to deprive him of his dominions. I have given him a safe-conduct for his person and not for his State.'¹

and mothers—have hurled Christ in the Sacrament to earth to rob Him of a silver tabernacle.

'O miserable Ravenna, it were better for thee not to have resisted the victor, but to have taken Brescia as a warning to thyself rather than thou become one to Rimini and Faenza. Send, Louis, the good old Trivulzio to teach these men of thine more continence, and to tell them how many of their kind for wrongs like these have been slain throughout all Italy' (*Orl. Fur.*, xiv. 8, 9). In the edition of 1516 there was a plainer allusion to the Sicilian vespers:—

'E conti lor dil sangue che fu spanto
Al vespro ch' intonò 'l horribil canto.'

¹ Sanudo, xiv. col. 455.

The safe-conduct has been preserved in the Archives of Modena. It is dated June 11, 1512, addressed 'to Our beloved Son, Alfonso of Este, formerly Duke of Ferrara,' and is couched in the most humiliating terms that an implacable and haughty victor could devise. The Duke's offences against the Holy See are set forth; stress is laid upon the helplessness of his position; but the Pope will imitate the example of Him whose place on earth he holds, will show himself a gentle shepherd, and receive back the lost sheep into the fold. Let Alfonso freely release Fabrizio Colonna and his other prisoners, and come humbly to Rome with a suitable train to beg pardon and arrange his affairs with the Pope. The brief grants him a safe-conduct to come and return, and pledges the faith of a Roman Pontiff that neither himself nor any of his company shall suffer any harm in person or in goods.¹

Among the offences which the Pope, in this remarkable document, declares that Alfonso has committed against God and him, is the 'most grievous sin' of having insulted 'the image representing Us.'² This, of course, refers to the famous bronze statue designed by Michelangelo, the remains of which the Duke had bought from the Bolognese at the beginning of the year, to have recast for a cannon. Exaggerated reports had reached Rome of what had been done; and the Pope, furiously indignant, told the Cardinal of Aragon (Alfonso's friend and supporter in the Sacred College) that he had been informed that the statue had been dragged through Ferrara by two very lean bullocks, crowned with grass in mockery, and then cast into a furnace to be fused as a special insult to him. It was further alleged that the Cardinal Ippolito had spat upon it from a window, as it was being brought through the streets. But the Mantuan agents in Rome succeeded, before the end of June, in assuaging the Pope's wrath in the matter. Ippolito protested that he was not even in Ferrara when it happened; Alfonso declared that he only wanted metal and had no intention of insulting the Pope's statue; eight fine pairs of oxen had brought it from Bologna; the street-boys of Ferrara had

¹ Archivio di Modena, original brief of June 11, 1512.

² 'Et ut cetera que gravia sunt omnia, sed hoc gravissimum omittamus, imaginem Nos representantem tanto ludibrio habere presumpseris.'

been thrashed for hooting at it when it arrived ; and, as far as it was an image of the Pope, it was in the Castello and had not been cast into the fire (which was perfectly true as far as the head of the statue was concerned, which the Duke kept as a treasure, using only the rest of the bronze for a new piece of artillery, *la Giulia*). He further undertook to make amends by having a fine new statue of the Pope made, and setting it up on a column in the chief piazza in Ferrara. When Julius heard this promise from Folenghino, the Mantuan ambassador, although still very angry about the cannon, he had the good sense to see the humour of the situation and roared with laughter.¹

The Marchesana Isabella, who was sparing no efforts on her brother's behalf, came in person to Ferrara with the papal brief. Alfonso had, a few days previously, released Fabrizio Colonna, who was by now healed of his wounds. On Isabella's arrival, he at once set free all his prisoners, and himself started for Rome, on June 23, with a small retinue of horsemen, accompanied by Isabella's faithful secretary, Mario Equicola. He left the government of the duchy in the hands of Cardinal Ippolito and the Duchess Lucrezia.²

At the Pope's orders, the Duke of Urbino at once advanced upon Reggio with the papal army. On July 2, Bernardino Boiardo, archpriest of the Duomo, appeared before the general council of the Commune, armed with a papal brief demanding the surrender of the city to the Pope. An appeal for imperial protection to Vitfurst, Maximilian's agent at Modena, produced nothing but an exhortation from the latter to have no king but Caesar, and a furious threat from the Duke of Urbino that he would destroy the city if they surrendered to any one but the Pope. Finding that Vitfurst could do nothing, Reggio surrendered to the Church on the evening of July 4 ; the Bishop, Ugo Rangone, who had kept away from the place in obedience to the Pope, entered the city in state the

¹ Campori, *Michelangelo Buonarroti e Alfonso I. d'Este*, pp. 129-131, especially letters of Benedetto Capiluppo and Folenghino, of June 17 and 24, 1512.

² When the safe-conduct came, a nun in Sant' Antonio had a fearful vision of the Beata Beatrice who showed her the Duke, blindfolded, about to fall into a deadly trap. Rodi, *MS. cit.*, f. 102 v.

next day, and absolved it from the interdict; Gian Matteo Sertorio, the Abbot of Nonantola, was made governor.¹

The excommunicated Duke of Ferrara arrived at Rome at nightfall on Sunday evening, July 4, the day of the surrender of Reggio to the Church. Apartments had been prepared for him by the Pope in the palace of the Cardinal of Mantua, Sigismondo Gonzaga, who was then legate in the Marches; but the Colonnese were making great preparations to receive him with all honour in the palace of Marcantonio Colonna at the Santi Apostoli, as soon as the absolution should be pronounced. Fabrizio Colonna had arrived on the previous day and had been much caressed by the Pope; that morning he had dined with Julius, and had been welcomed by him as one of the deliverers of Italy.² Julius had commanded that no one except Federigo Gonzaga, Alfonso's young nephew, who was then residing as a hostage at the Papal Court and much beloved by the old Pope, should go to meet the excommunicated vassal of the Holy See; but his orders were disregarded by the Colonnese and evaded by his own daughter, Madonna Felice.

'My most reverend and illustrious Monsignore,' writes the Marchesana Isabella to Cardinal Ippolito, 'a horseman of ours has at this eighteenth hour arrived from Rome with letters from our common son Federigo, from Folenghino and from Mario, to the Lord Marquis and to me, containing the arrival of the Lord Duke in Rome on Sunday at about the first hour of night, met five miles outside Rome by Federigo by order of the Pope who said: "We want you to go to meet your uncle and to salute him in our name, and tell him to be of good cheer, for he shall be well pleased by us." He was also met by the Lord Fabrizio and the Lord Marcantonio Colonna, and by the Lord Giovanni Giordano Orsini and Madonna Felice, his wife, who pretended that they had come together there by chance. They accompanied him to the house of Cardinal Gonzaga where he is staying. All Rome ran to see him. He was secretly visited that night by the Cardinal of Aragon. To-morrow he is to go to the consistory to ask pardon and to

¹ Chiesi, *Reggio nell'Emilia sotto i Pontefici*, pp. 4-15; Panciroli, *Storia di Reggio*, ii. pp. 109, 110.

² Sanudo, xiv. col. 481.

receive the benediction. The cause will be committed to three or four Cardinals; there are good hopes, for all the College and all Rome will favour him. Mario writes that Aragon has told him that he has it from the mouth of the Pope that the Lord Alberto da Carpi, the Lord Giovanni Francesco della Mirandola, and Messer Niccolò da Este shall not be able to harm him. I know that your most illustrious Lordship will have this news and more from your own agents; still, for my own satisfaction, I have wished to summarise the letters which we have, and here inclosed to send you yours. If I were the first to give you this good news, it would delight me greatly, hoping that the affair of Reggio, too, will be arranged. I commend me to the good grace of your Lordship and of the Lady Duchess, to whom I know that this letter of mine will be in common.¹

For a few days Alfonso was practically a prisoner, the Pope having strictly commanded that, until the absolution was pronounced, neither he nor any of his party should leave Gonzaga's house nor go about in Rome, save only their *spenditore*.² On July 9, Fabrizio Colonna and his kinsmen escorted him to the Vatican, where in public consistory he was formally absolved from the excommunication. The Pope was seated upon his throne in full pontificals, when the Duke, dressed in the French fashion in black damask, was introduced into the presence and knelt at his feet. There had been some difficulty the day before, because the Pope wished him to use certain words which he was unwilling to do; but he had been compelled to give way and to use them.

'Holy Father,' he said, 'I confess that I have sinned grievously against the Divine Majesty and your Holiness and this Holy Apostolic See, and that I have committed a very great sin of ingratitude for so many benefits received from your Holiness. But, relying upon your clemency, I have come to your feet, supplicating you humbly, by the mercy of

¹ Letter dated Mantua, July 10, 1512, from Isabella to her brother, the Cardinal Ippolito 'etiam dormienti. Ferrariae cito cito.' Archivio di Modena, *Lettere di Isabella d'Este Gonzaga*. The Messer Niccolò da Este, mentioned in the letter, is probably Niccolò di Rinaldo d'Este, who was attached to the Papal Court, and appears to have been sentenced to death for treason at Ferrara in October, 1515.

² Rodi, MS. *cit.*, f. 103.

THE KING OF COURT POETS

the Omnipotent God and your own benignity, that you be pleased not to consider my demerits, but pardon me and restore me to Holy Mother Church, as I offer myself to be ever obedient to your Holiness and to this Holy Apostolic See.'

Immediately the papal procurator-fiscal said: 'Will you promise, my Lord, and swear to be obedient and to do whatever his Holiness shall command?'

'I will.'

Then the Pope answered with much warmth, and scarcely 'manifesting the most certain signs of clemency' that Giovio asserts of his bearing on this occasion:—

'My Lord Don Alfonso,—You say truly that you have sinned grievously against the Divine Majesty and our person and this Holy Apostolic See, and especially in that most grave sin of ingratitude, without considering so many benefits received from Us and from this Holy Apostolic See. You know well that we have liberated you from the subjection of the Venetians and freed you from their Visdomino, and we have honoured you with the title of Gonfaloniere, which the Majesty of the King of France demanded with so much insistence, but we preferred rather to gratify you than his Majesty—and you would not accept it without his leave—and with many other benefits. But you, like an ungrateful man, have committed all manner of evil works against the Church and our person, and used many tyrannies against your people, buying salt at a low price and selling it dear, and many other things that we keep silent about; and, lastly, you have gone in person against the cities of the Church and treated Ravenna as you know, where, if your person had been taken, think what you merited; but by the Divine clemency, by means of this Holy League, the Majesty of the King of France has been chased out of Italy, for the tyrannies that he used and his bad deportment towards the peoples and against the Church. And even as things have prospered in Italy, so we hope they will over there in France, by means of the Catholic King and the Majesty of the King of England. Now that you are come to humble yourself to Holy Mother Church, who ever hath her arms open to all who return to her, we are content to give you absolution, if you promise to be obedient to Us and to Holy Mother Church.'

Then, when the Duke had sworn upon the crucifix, the Pope removed his mitre and, having had the book brought before him, read the form of absolution, adding that it was only to hold valid if the Duke obeyed his will. Alfonso then passed into the chapel, where the penitentiaries of San Pietro all touched him on the shoulders with their rods, after which he returned to the Pope, who gave him for penance to visit the four churches of San Pietro, San Paolo, the Lateran, and Santa Maria Maggiore. The Duke formally thanked the Holy Father, kissed his hand and foot, and exchanged courtesies with the Cardinals, after which the consistory broke up.¹

A few days later Federigo Gonzaga, by the Pope's permission, entertained Alfonso and his gentlemen at a banquet in the Vatican. The Duke was greatly delighted with Pinturicchio's frescoes in the Borgia apartments, which must, indeed, as Klaczko remarks, have had a peculiar interest for the husband of Lucrezia Borgia. After dinner there were musicians and buffoons to amuse him, and then, Alfonso having expressed a great wish to see the ceiling of the Cappella Sistina where Michelangelo's frescoes were in all their fresh glory, Federigo sent to summon Michelangelo himself in the name of the Pope. 'And the Lord Duke went up to the vault with several persons, who, however, gradually came down again, and the Lord Duke stayed above with Michelangelo and could not satiate himself with gazing at those figures.' He heaped compliments upon the artist, and induced him to promise him a picture. In the meanwhile, Federigo had taken his other guests to see the papal apartments and Raphael's frescoes in the Stanze. 'After the Lord Duke had come down, they wanted to bring him to see the chamber of the Pope and those rooms that Raphael has painted; but he would not go, and his gentlemen said that he had had too much reverence to go into the chamber where the Pope slept.'²

These were days of anxious suspense. The whole question had been referred to six Cardinals to report upon, but the

¹ Sanudo, xiv. coll. 482, 484, 485.

² Undated letter from Grossino to the Marchesana of Mantua. Luzio, *Federico Gonzaga ostaggio*, pp. 540, 541.

Pope reserved the final decision to himself. The Spanish ambassador, the Colonnas, Giovanna della Rovere (the Pope's sister-in-law and mother of the Duke of Urbino), even the Cardinals, especially those of Aragon and Hungary, pressed Julius to deal leniently with Alfonso; but Alberto Pio, then in Rome as the orator of Caesar, strove his utmost to poison the Pope's mind against the man whom he still regarded as his deadliest foe, and urged him to disregard the safe-conduct and have him arrested.¹ And Alberto prevailed. The Pope would hear of nothing short of the complete surrender of the duchy of Ferrara to the Holy See, and bade the Duke deliver into his hands his two captive brothers, Ferrando and Giulio, from their prison in the Tower of the Lions.

'The Pope,' wrote Alfonso to the Cardinal Ippolito, 'demands Ferrara of me, and would give us Asti instead, which is worth from fifteen to twenty thousand ducats a year, and in the meanwhile, until he can give us Asti, an equal income from towns in Romagna; and he wants the prisoners. We confess that Don Ferrante is alive, and we refuse to give him Ferrara, and consequently Don Ferrante. The Catholic ambassador says that the Spanish troops will not be against us, and so he declares that he has spoken for us vigorously. Giovanni Cola says that the Emperor will not let the Pope have Ferrara. The Lord Alberto is gone to the Cardinal Gucense. Let your Lordship do now all you can with Gucense, and also, if it be possible, write to the Catholic Majesty. If your Lordship cannot hold Rubiera, and if we leave without any conclusion being made, you can give it to Vitfurst, since we have reason to hope in the Emperor. If we leave without coming to a conclusion, we shall not attempt to go more by direct ways, but to save ourselves as best we can, and to return to Ferrara as quickly as possible.'²

The heat was terrible; many Cardinals were leaving Rome.

¹ Sanudo, xiv. coll. 482, 510; Giovio, p. 91. Alberto left Rome on July 15 or 16, but the Pope's mind was by then made up.

² Cappelli, Document 10. The letter is dated June 17, 1512, but should clearly be July. It is addressed in cipher to the Cardinal at Ferrara, under the name of Alessandro da Cremona. I have ventured to substitute 'Gucense' for the obvious misreading 'Burgense,' as the person alluded to is Bishop Lang of Gurk (made cardinal at the same time as the Swiss Schinner of Sion in the previous year), who was now representing Maximilian at the Congress of the Confederates at Mantua.

The Colonnas—Prospero in the Campagna, Fabrizio and Marcantonio in the city—were gathering troops to join Cardona's army in Lombardy. The Pope retired into Sant' Angelo, and awaited Alfonso's request for a fresh audience, with the intention of making him a prisoner as soon as he had got him into the castle, if he would not accept his terms. The guards at the gates of the city were doubled. The Cardinal of Aragon sent to warn the Colonnas of the Duke's danger, and these gallant noblemen, in whom (to adopt Dante's phrase) the *semente santa* lived again of the ancient Romans, resolved not to be false to the trust put in them.

Before daybreak, on the morning of July 19, Fra Angelo Lucido, a Venetian agent in the Servite convent of San Marcello, was wakened by the trampling of horses. He rushed to the window, and saw the Duke of Ferrara, with Fabrizio and Marcantonio Colonna and their armed soldiery, galloping past, making for the Porta San Giovanni. They broke through the guards, and reached Marino, the headquarters of the power of the Colonnas, where Alfonso was for the moment in safety.

This done, Marcantonio and Fabrizio returned to Rome. The latter boldly went to the Pope and declared that Alfonso had merely left Rome for a pleasure-tour among the Castelli, because the air of the city was impairing his health, and he urged his Holiness to make terms with him. Julius said that there was no need for the Duke to have fled, as he was free to go as he pleased; but he would hear nothing of coming to any compromise.¹ 'I had given him a good safe-conduct,' he said to Federigo Cattanei, 'and I intended to keep it to him; but he has chosen to escape as he pleased. I am perfectly capable of taking Ferrara, and of chastising him too; if I had wished to seize him, who would have prevented me? If we had not been able to come to an agreement, I would have brought him with me to Bologna and then to Ferrara.'² Nevertheless, Julius spared no efforts to have the Duke again in his power. Papal spies and agents swarmed over the

¹ Sanudo, xiv. coll. 511, 514. (Letter of Frate Angelo Lucido from Rome, July 19.)

² Luzio, *op. cit.*, p. 541. Letter of July 25, 1512, from Cattanei to the Marquis of Mantua.

Campagna and the territory of the Colonnese; armed papal barks waited off the Neapolitan coast, to intercept him in case he should attempt to escape northwards by sea. One of his company, Lorenzo Strozzi, was captured and thrown into prison by the Pope; but Alfonso d'Este had completely disappeared. For three months none of his enemies, and but few of his friends, could hear what had become of him. Prospero Colonna, holding that the honour of his House was involved in his guest's safety, kept him concealed in his castles; closely disguised, now as a man-at-arms, now as a huntsman, now as a friar, the Duke wandered about central Italy under the protection of the Colonnas, waiting for an opportunity that should enable him once more to get through the Papal States and reach Ferrara.¹

In the meanwhile, the whole of the Estensian dominions had been lost, save Ferrara itself and its immediate district. Ippolito, finding it necessary to concentrate all available forces for the protection of the capital, gave over Finale, San Felice, and the strong fortress of Rubiera in deposit to Vit-furst at Modena, as pertaining to the Empire. But neither Swiss, nor Spaniards, nor Venetians seemed disposed to make themselves the executioners of the Pope's vengeance; the Duke of Urbino, unwillingly and slowly, advanced with the papal army. The Pope complained to Folenghino of the moral support that the Marquis of Mantua was giving to the Ferrarese. 'He swears,' wrote Isabella to Cardinal Ippolito, 'that if the Marquis shelters your Lordship, the Lady Duchess, and the children, the army that is to go to Ferrara shall be turned to assail this State, and that he will have no respect for the Emperor, and will send our son Federigo to the prison of Venice.'² Isabella, in October, sent Mario Equicola and Baldassare Castiglione to her son-in-law, the Duke of Urbino, to induce him to make only a pretence of advancing upon Ferrara. Francesco Maria professed the utmost disgust at the task he had in hand, and he promised her that, while openly professing to obey the Pope and do his very worst

¹ Sanudo, xiv. col. 538; Giovin, pp. 91, 92.

² Letter of August 19, 1512. Luzio and Renier, *Mantova e Urbino*, p. 205.

against Ferrara, he would move as slowly as he could, and make the enterprise as difficult as possible.¹ The Marquis, however, had been thoroughly alarmed by the papal threats. 'We assure his Holiness,' he wrote to his agents in Rome, 'upon our faith as a loyal lord and most faithful servant, that, if Don Alfonso is rash enough to come into our power and let us lay hands upon him, we shall undoubtedly do it, and hold him at the disposition of his Holiness; and, if goods or cattle of Ferrarese come into the Mantovano, we shall have booty made of them. Would to God that we had had the luck of catching one of the schismatics or of the Bentivoglios, to make a gift of them to his Beatitude and show him our disposition.'²

During these months, Ariosto appears to have been with the Cardinal Ippolito at Ferrara. A superb passage in one of his elegies seems to imply that he was at Ravenna shortly after the battle, and saw with his own eyes the appalling scene of carnage and outrage:—

'Io venni dove le campagne rosse
 Eran del sangue barbaro e latino,
 Che fiera stella dianzi a furor mosse ;
 E vidi un morto a l'altro sì vicino
 Che, senza premer lor, quasi il terreno
 A molte miglia non dava il camino.
 E da chi alberga tra Garonna e 'l Rheno
 Vidi uscir crudeltà, che ne dovia
 Tutto il mondo d'horror rimaner pieno.'³

Most probably he had come as the bearer of a message from the Cardinal to the Duke. Simone Fornari and Pigna describe a mission undertaken by the poet at Alfonso's orders to the Pope, who according to the one was then in Romagna, and

¹ Luzio and Renier, *op. cit.*, p. 206. It will be remembered that Francesco Maria della Rovere had married Isabella's daughter, Leonora Gonzaga, in December, 1509.

² Letter from the Marquis of Mantua to Folenghino and the Archdeacon of Gabbioneta, November 13, 1512. Luzio and Renier, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

³ 'I came where the fields were red with barbarian and Italian blood, which a fierce star had just before moved to fury ;

'And I saw one dead so near another that, without treading on them, the soil for many miles hardly left a path.

'And from the dwellers between the Garonne and the Rhine I saw such cruelty proceed, that all the world should remain full of horror thereat' (*Elegy* x.). Cf. Luigi da Porto, Letter lxvi.

according to the other at a villa near Rome, and who was so inflamed with anger against the Ferrarese and their Duke that he threatened Ariosto's life. Fornari dates this embassy immediately after the battle of Ravenna, Pigna apparently puts it in the preceding year; but, in each case, there is probably some confusion with Lodovico's mission, as already described, to Julius on behalf of Ippolito.¹ Neither did Ariosto accompany the Duke to Rome, as sometimes stated. In July, we find him still at Ferrara. The Marchesana Isabella, probably on the occasion of her bringing the papal brief to the city, would have him read her some more of his *Orlando*—as we learn from a letter of the poet himself, dated Ferrara, July 14, 1512, to the Marquis of Mantua, in answer to an appeal from the latter to let him see the unfinished manuscript of the poem.²

But, in the latter part of August, the poet's literary work was suddenly interrupted, and he was sent southwards by the Cardinal to join the proscribed and fugitive Duke. We do not know how Ariosto slipped through the Papal States, nor what desperate adventures he experienced in meeting his disguised sovereign. At the end of September, Alfonso's long-awaited opportunity of escaping his papal pursuers came at last. Prospero Colonna, with two hundred men-at-arms, was ordered to join Cardona's army in Lombardy, and he brought Alfonso (apparently attended by Ariosto) with him, disguised as one of the soldiers of his troop, in spite of the diligent watch and ward kept by the Pope to prevent him passing. As soon as they had reached Tuscany, Alfonso and the poet took leave of Colonna, and, thinking every moment that the papal horsemen were at their heels, got undetected to Florence. Even while thus flying for his life, Ariosto could remember and quote his Virgil:—

'Your most excellent Lordship,' he writes to Lodovico Gonzaga, 'has surely somewhat of the witch and necromancer, or of something more wonderful, in contriving to find me here

¹ Cf. Gabriele Ariosti, *In obitu Ludovici Areosti carmen*, p. 25. But it is clear from Ariosto's own words in *Satire* i. (152, 153) that it was not for Alfonso, but for Ippolito, that he had gone to Rome: 'A placar la grande ira di Secondo.'

² Letter x. See below, Chapter xi.

with your letter of August 20, just as I have come out of the dens and caves of wild beasts and come back to the society of men. I cannot yet speak about our perils: *animus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit*; and, on the other hand, your Lordship will already have heard of them: *Quis iam locus, quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?* For my part, the terror is not yet quieted, for I find myself still being hunted and tracked by the sleuth-hounds, from which may the Lord deliver us. I have passed the night in a hut for shelter, near Florence, with the noble masquerader, my ears on the alert, and my heart palpitating. *Quis talia fando, etc.* The most illustrious Lord Duke, with whom Pianelli conferred a long while yesterday, will speak of the two affairs to the Cardinal, who is expected from Bologna in a few days; and I myself, as far as I have power to serve you, will use every means, being most desirous of your Lordship's honour, as your affectionate servant. You will hear from Messer Rinaldo what is to be done and hoped, and I trust you will be satisfied, albeit I am not too strenuous an orator. The sky keeps still very dark, so we shall not set out at once, in order not to have still to go in masquerade out of the season and with staff. Your Lordship be pleased to remember me to the most illustrious Lady Princess Flisca, as far as is allowed to a most faithful and most devoted servant.¹

At Florence, the disguised Duke and his poet had found the Republic overthrown, and the Gonfaloniere Soderini away in exile. The congress of the ambassadors of the League at Mantua had decreed the restoration of Massimiliano Sforza to Milan, and of the Medici—Giuliano and the Cardinal Giovanni and their nephew, the younger Lorenzo—to Florence. The storming and hideous sack of Prato, on August 29, by the Spanish soldiery of the Viceroy Cardona, with whom was the Cardinal Giovanni as papal legate, was the first result.

¹ Letter xi., dated Florence, October 1, 1512. This Lodovico Gonzaga was the son of Gian Francesco Gonzaga of Bozzolo and Sabbioneta (an uncle of the Marquis of Mantua and the patron of the poet of the *Mambriano*), and brother of the condottiere, Federigo Gonzaga. By his wife, Francesca di Gian Luigi Fieschi (the 'Principessa Flisca' of Ariosto's letter), he was the father of the poet, Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga, and the famous beauty, Giulia, whose praises are in the *Orlando Furioso*, xxxvii. 9-11 and xlvii. 8, respectively.

Alfonso's secretary, Bonaventura Pistofilo, who was with the army, had been surely seasoned in horrors in the service of his fierce master; but he was overcome with the frightful scenes enacted in what had been the Garden of Eden of the Florentine empery. 'These Spaniards,' he wrote the next day, 'have made in here the cruellest slaughter and butchery that ever I saw; all the streets and houses and the very churches were full of dead; and all the women had fled to some monasteries and churches, where were heard the most miserable lamentations and weeping that words can tell; and the whole town has been given up to sack. For eight days I shall not be sound in body or mind, by reason of what I have seen and heard; and I would gladly not have been there.' And, in a postscript, he cries, almost inarticulately: *O Dio, O Dio, O Dio, che crudeltà!*¹

On the first of September, Giuliano de' Medici entered Florence, and, a fortnight later, the Cardinal himself returned in triumph to the city from which he had fled in youth nearly twenty years before. The government was placed in the hands of a Balìa composed of Medicean adherents nominated by the Cardinal, and the State was reduced to what it had been before the expulsion of Piero in 1494. 'The city,' wrote Francesco Vettori, himself a supporter of the Medici, 'was reduced to doing nothing save what the Cardinal de' Medici willed. This is called the method of true tyranny; but, to speak frankly and truly of the things of this world, I say that if one of those republics were established which Plato described, or which Thomas More, the Englishman, writes was found in Utopia, it could perchance be said not to be a tyrannical government; but all those republics or princes whom I know of in history, or which I have seen, seem to me to smack of tyranny.'² The Pope himself professed to be displeased. When Jacopo Salviati and Matteo Strozzi at the beginning of November arrived in Rome, as ambassadors to thank him for this change of State in Florence, 'his Holiness, according to his furious nature, unreservedly

¹ Letter dated Prato, August 30, 1512, the fourth of those published by Cappelli in appendix to Pistofilo's *Vita di Alfonso d'Este*.

² *Sommario della Storia d'Italia dal 1511 al 1527* (Archivio Storico Italiano, appendix, vol. vi.), p. 293.

blamed the Cardinal de' Medici, reproving him for going with a guard of halberdiers and violently holding the State with troops and arms, declaring that it had never been his intention to build up new tyrannies, but ever to beat them down and extinguish them, as of late he had done in the city of Bologna.¹

The Cardinal was temporarily absent at his Bolognese legation when Alfonso and Ariosto arrived, but he soon returned to Florence. We do not know what passed between him and the Duke; but he professed the utmost friendship for Ariosto, and assured him that, if he ever needed anything, he would treat him as his own brother.² Alfonso got back to Ferrara in safety on October 14, prepared for a strenuous resistance. But this was not to be needed. The assembling of the Lateran Council was stayed, and the papal desire of conquest ended, by the mortal illness of Pope Julius.

The Carnival of 1513 was celebrated in Rome and Florence alike with more than usual splendour. In Florence, Giuliano and Lorenzo led the bands of merry-makers; for the latter prince, the historian Nardi and the painter Jacopo da Pontormo directed and designed the sumptuous masquerades that represented the seven triumphs of the age of gold, 'as for a good augury of the felicity of the times to come.'³ A sterner note was struck in the celebrations in Rome. On Carnival Thursday, February 3, while the Pope lay on his death-bed, a magnificent pageant passed through the streets, setting forth before the eyes of the Romans the grim triumph of that terrible old man whom Death now claimed for her own. Preceded by the banners of Rome and by executioners with the ghastly insignia of their craft, escorted by thousands of brilliantly armed soldiers, horse and foot, a long line of chariots drove round, allegorically representing the events of the past year. Italy the Queen appeared, bound with French fetters, the trophies of her ancient victories heaped at her

¹ Nardi, ii. p. 14.

² 'E più volte, e legato et in Fiorenza,
Mi disse che al bisogno mai non era
Per far da me al fratel suo differenza' (*Satire* iii. 100-102).

This is the only occasion upon which Ariosto could possibly have met the Cardinal at Florence.

³ Nardi, ii. pp. 16, 17. Cf. Vasari, ed. Milanesi, vi. pp. 250-255.

feet; Italy Delivered followed, bearing the palm of victory and surrounded by the papal soldiery; then came the Apennine and the Po, with the chariots of the captured cities, Bologna with her towers, but chained as a traitress, *causa mali tanti*, Reggio, Parma and Piacenza, Genoa and Savona. Moses with the Brazen Serpent and St. Ambrose, the expeller of heretics, rode as types of the Holy Father. Then still more gorgeous chariots set forth the glory of the Della Rovere, liberator of Italy and extinguisher of schism: an Angel slaying the Hydra, in allusion either to the Holy League or to the restoration of the unity of the Church; the triumph of Apollo, representing the work of Julius as the Maecenas of the age; the glory of Aaron, with the punishment of those who had offered strange fire; the triumph of the Lateran Council; and, at last, the apotheosis of the Pope himself on the summit of the golden oak of his House, with the Emperor and the Kings of Spain and England at his feet. Then followed all the noblest and fairest youths of Rome, none of them over sixteen years of age, splendidly attired and mounted, each attended by the retainers of his House; none of them were masked, but upon their caps or robes they bore the names of the illustrious Roman heroes from whom they claimed descent. The rear was brought up by the Gonfalonieri of the People with their standards and the Senator of Rome with his household; while at the end of all the procession came an interminable band of armed horsemen.¹

The end of Pope Julius was more edifying than his life had been. Feeling death at hand, he had his bull against a simoniacal election confirmed by the consistory, and declared that the choice of his successor pertained to the Cardinals and not to the Council, from which he excluded the schismatical Cardinals whom, for the rest, he pardoned. As a personal favour to himself, he asked the Sacred College to grant the city of Pesaro as a fief to the Duke of Urbino; but he heeded the interests of his own family in nothing else, and refused the persistent requests of his daughter Felice, who was watching over his last moments, to make her half-brother, Guido da

¹ Letter of February 20, 1513, from Battista Stabellino to Isabella d'Este, in Luzio, *Federico Gonzaga ostaggio*, pp. 577-582. See also Klaczko, pp. 438-440.

Montefalco, a cardinal. On February 20, he received the last Sacraments with contrition and devotion, confessing to the Cardinals at his bedside that he had been a great sinner and had not governed the Church as he ought. Against the wish of Madonna Felice and Alberto da Carpi, the doctors gave him a dose of *aurum potabile* with no result,¹ and he died in the night between February 20 and February 21.

The Viceroy Cardona at once occupied Parma and Piacenza with his Spaniards, in the name of the Duke of Milan. Alfonso retook his towns in Romagna, and appeared before the walls of Reggio, expecting the citizens to take up arms in his favour. But the Reggians decided to remain faithful to the Holy See, and he withdrew without venturing on an assault. On March 8, Vitfurst sent from Modena the podestà of Rubiera, Giovanni Compagni, to bid them yield to Caesar, threatening that Cardona would otherwise compel them. But the Reggians answered 'that the city had no intention of withdrawing itself from the Signory of the Holy See, because from it they hoped for many and great benefits.'²

¹ Guicciardini, xi. 4; Luzio, *op. cit.*, p. 555.

² Chiesi, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 27.

CHAPTER V

PUT NOT YOUR TRUST IN PRINCES

THE Conclave met in the Vatican Palace on March 4, 1513—Paride de' Grassi being master of the ceremonies, Tommaso Fedra Inghirami secretary. There were twenty-five Cardinals present—but Ippolito d'Este was detained by ill health at Ferrara. On March 11, early in the afternoon, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese appeared at the window to announce the election to the people in the usual form: 'I give you tidings of great joy. We have a Pontiff, the Lord Giovanni de' Medici, who has assumed the title of Leo the Tenth.'

'When this proclamation was made,' writes a contemporary, 'there was heard for the space of two hours in the Castello Adriano and at the Apostolic Palace so great an uproar and report of cannons and other artillery, and sound of various instruments and bells, and voices of people crying *Viva Leone* and *Palle Palle*, that it verily seemed that the heavens were thundering or lightening.'¹

The new Sovereign Pontiff was only thirty-seven years old, of the highest reputation, and a general burst of enthusiasm greeted his elevation. 'Almost all Christendom,' writes Guicciardini, 'felt the greatest delight at this election, and men were universally convinced that he would prove a most excellent Pontiff, by the glorious memory of his father's worth and by the fame that resounded everywhere of his own liberality and benignity; he was reputed chaste and of a blameless life, and men hoped that, after the pattern of his father, he would prove a lover of men of letters and of all illustrious spirits. And this expectation was increased by

¹ Giacomo Penni, quoted by Armellini, *Il diario di Leone X. di Paride de' Grassi* (Rome, 1884), pp. 91-95.

the fact of the election having been made spotlessly, without simony or suspicion of any stain.'¹ As Leo was only in minor orders, he was ordained priest on March 15 and consecrated bishop on the 17th by the Bishop of Ostia, Cardinal Raffaello Riario, and on the 19th was crowned Pope by Cardinal Farnese in the old half-ruined basilica of San Pietro.

'At the first tidings of this most happy news,' wrote Isabella d'Este to Bernardo da Bibbiena, whom the Pope had made protonotary apostolic, count palatine and general treasurer of the Church, with most ample faculties, and who was to receive the cardinal's hat before the end of the year, 'we found and still find ourselves in such great happiness and jubilation, that verily never since we were born have we had greater, following as it does immediately upon the death of Pope Julius. For all, we praise and thank our Lord God, hoping that, through his Holiness's very great goodness and prudence, we shall see the settlement of the State of the Lord Duke our brother, the establishment of that of the Lord Duke of Milan our nephew, the honour and exaltation of the Lord Marquis our consort, and finally the peace of all Italy. For our own concerns, we promise ourselves a firm protection and perpetual favour from his Holiness, both because of the bond of spiritual affinity, and because of the love and observance we bore him when he was the Cardinal de' Medici, as also for the friendship that we have with the magnificent Lord Giuliano his brother; and not less because of the favour and patronage that we hope your Lordship will lend us with his Holiness, since we have no fear that you can ever change nature and habits by reason of any honour or dignity that you may have.'²

One of the first to hurry to the Eternal City on the receipt of these good tidings was Lodovico Ariosto. He started from Ferrara on March 12, or the following day, together with Sigismondo Cantelmi and Ermes Bentivoglio, with a commission from the Duke to offer his Excellence's congratulations to the newly elected Pontiff and to obtain general

¹ *Storia d'Italia*, xi. 4.

² Letter of March 28, 1513. Luzio and Renier, *Mantova e Urbino*, p. 211.

absolution from the excommunication.¹ Nor was the poet without pretty lively hopes of preferment for himself. Indeed, in his usual casual good nature, he had probably undertaken to get something good for half his friends in Ferrara. He had been for many years on terms of comparative intimacy with the Medici, and considered himself one of the new Pope's oldest friends. Before his elevation to the Papacy, the Cardinal Giovanni had shown him every mark of affection and esteem, and Ariosto did not forget his recently repeated assurance that, when he needed anything, he would make no difference between him and his own brother, Giuliano.² As a matter of fact, Leo had a regular trick of saying things of that kind. He once wept when some one mentioned Michelangelo, and said he loved him as a brother; and he told Mario Equicola, who had come to congratulate him in the name of the Gonzagas of Mantua, that he could not discriminate between the Marchesana Isabella and his own sister, save that the former deserved more reverence. It was, indeed, a mere form of words with him, as Messer Lodovico now learned to his cost.

When Ariosto appeared in his presence, Pope Leo bent down towards him from his throne, grasped him by the hand, and kissed him on both cheeks; and the poet, 'with breast and robe full of hope, but splashed with rain and mud,' went to sup and sleep at the Montone, a humble hostelry near the Pantheon in the Piazza della Maddalena, in the seventh heaven of bliss. These hopes were soon dashed to the ground. Crowds of Florentines pressed round their Pontiff, bound by ties of kinship to the Medici or loudly protesting that they had suffered for their fidelity to Piero or Giuliano in their exile.³ And when we add to these those who, in the poet's sarcastic phrase, had helped to transform this meek lamb into a lion, it is clear that a mere Ferrarese had no chance at all, unless he had more imperative claims upon the Pope's

¹ Rodi, *Annali*, MS. cit., f. 104 v. Cf. Campori, *Notizie per la Vita di Lodovico Ariosto*, pp. 35, 36.

² *Sat.* iii. 85-102; vii. 7-12.

³ *Sat.* iii. 151-165, 175-186. On March 23, Equicola wrote to the Marchesana Isabella: 'Tanti fiorentini che è una compassione: tutto 'l palagio, tutta Roma non è altro' (Luzio and Renier, *op. cit.*, p. 210).

prodigal generosity than Messer Lodovico could urge. He and his two fellow-ambassadors appear to have successfully transacted the Duke's business. The absolution was promptly sent to Ferrara; the Mass of the Holy Spirit was solemnly sung in the Duomo on March 18, followed by a general procession through the city.¹ But for himself the poet got next to nothing.

Still Ariosto lingered on for a few weeks in Rome, disillusioned and disappointed. A letter of his to Benedetto Fantino, the chancellor of the Cardinal Ippolito, shows his state of mind:—

'My honoured Messer Benedetto,—I have received by my page a letter of yours very late, because he has come on here on foot from Florence, where he stayed some days, and has been a long time on the way. I have not yet done anything about your business; not because I have not remembered it, but because I have not been able to find any way to begin. I arrived here in travelling costume, and, through not having clothes, I have avoided calling on persons of high rank, because here, more than in any other place, nothing is thought of a man if he is not well-dressed. It is true that I have kissed the Pope's foot, and he made a show of being glad to *hear* me; I do not believe that he *saw* me, because, since he has been Pope, he no longer uses his eyeglass. No offer has been made me, neither by his Holiness nor by my friends newly become great; it seems to me that these latter all imitate the Pope in being short-sighted. I will make an effort and begin to-day, without further delay, to see if I can do anything through that Messer Paris.² To make use of Messer Bernardo would, I believe, be useless, because he is too great a personage, and it is a great labour to be able to approach him; for he has always so dense a circle of people round him that one can hardly get through, and, besides, one has to struggle at ten doors before arriving where he is. The thing is so hateful to me that I do not know when I saw him; nor am I trying to see him again, neither him nor any man who is in that palace. Still, for love of you, I will

¹ Rodi, MS. *cit.*, f. 104 v.

² Paride de' Grassi.

do violence to my nature; but it is little that I shall be able to do, because, after the coronation which will be within four days, I think of coming back to Ferrara. I understand that at Ferrara they think that I am a great personage here; I pray you to get them out of this mistake (that is, those with whom you chance to speak), and make them understand that I am of much less consequence here than I was at Ferrara; for if they did not know this, and some one asked some service of me which I could not possibly do, they might write me down an ass.'¹

Another member of the family was, however, more fortunate. Carlo Ariosti, the brother of Lodovico's beloved Pandolfo, had been one of the conclavists of the Vicechancellor of the Roman Church, the Cardinal Sisto della Rovere. The Pope made him a count of the Sacred Lateran Palace, conferred upon him a benefice in the diocese of Bologna, and reserved to him a canonry and one of the fattest benefices in Padua; a little later, this favoured scion of the poetic house was made a canon of St. Peter's.² For the sake of Malatesta and Pandolfo, we will not grudge him his no doubt deserved distinctions.

The Pope had postponed his solemn procession to take possession of the Lateran until April 11, in order for it to be held on the first anniversary of the day upon which he had been made prisoner at Ravenna—which was also the feast of Pope St. Leo I. The victor of Ravenna himself, Alfonso of Ferrara, appeared in Rome, under a safe-conduct; and, by a brief of April 10, the Pope gave him leave to take the same place in the morrow's pageant that his father would have held. He further absolved him from the sentence of deposition pronounced by his predecessor, and allowed him to take part in his ducal robes.³ Nothing was spared that could make the ceremony splendid and imposing, and it was said that never since the inundations of the barbarians had Rome seen a day more magnificent and more superb than this. The Duke of

¹ Letter xii., dated Rome, April 7, 1513.

² Briefs of March 19, 1513; May 19, 1513; Feb. 26, 1514; Feb. 26, 1515. *Leonis X. P. M. Regesta*, ed. Hergenröther, fasc. i. pp. 6, 96, 98; ii. p. 151; iv. p. 443; vii. p. 36.

³ *Ibid.*, fasc. i. p. 121.

Ferrara in the solemnity bore aloft the great gonfalone of the Church. The Pope himself spent a hundred thousand ducats, and the enthusiasm of the crowd knew no bounds. But prudent men were already beginning to shake their heads, desiring more gravity and moderation, scandalised at such excess of pomp in a Pope, and judging that the useless squandering of the resources accumulated by Julius was especially unfitting in the present condition of affairs.¹

Bembo and Sadoletto had been made papal secretaries, and Ariosto had at least hoped for some post lucrative enough to deliver him from his uncongenial slavery in the service of the Cardinal. That his disappointment was bitter, we gather especially from the seventh Satire:—

‘Fin che de la speranza mi rimembre,
 Che coi fior venne e con le prime foglie,
 E poi fuggì senza aspettar settembre;
 (Venne il dì che la Chiesa fu per moglie
 Data a Leone, e che a le nozze vidi
 A tanti amici miei rosse le spoglie;
 Venne a Calende e fuggì inanzi a gli Idi)
 Fin che me ne rimembre, esser non puote
 Che di promessa altrui mai più mi fidi.
 La sciocca speme a le contrade ignote
 Sali del ciel, quel dì che ’l pastor santo
 La man mi strinse e mi baciò le gote;
 Ma, fatte in pochi giorni poi di quanto
 Potea ottenere le esperienze prime,
 Quanto andò in alto, in giù tornò altrettanto.’²

There was no help for it, however, and the poet once more took the hard yoke of the Cardinal upon his shoulders. We do not know whether he returned to Ferrara or waited in Rome; but in the early summer we find him at Florence.

A fever of delight and exultation had taken possession of

¹ Guicciardini, xi. 4.

² ‘As long as I remember the hope that came with the flowers and with the first leaves, and then fled without awaiting September;

‘(It came the day that the Church was given as wife to Leo, and that I saw so many friends of mine robed in red at the nuptials;

‘It came at the Kalends and fled before the Ides) as long as I remember it, it is impossible for me ever again to trust another’s promise.

‘My foolish hope soared up to the unknown regions of heaven, that day when the holy Shepherd pressed my hand and kissed my cheeks;

‘But, when in a few days it had made the first essays of what it could obtain, it sank down as low as it had mounted high’ (*Satire vii.* 55-69).

the Pontiff's own natal city of Florence. 'The whole city was turned upside down with gladness,' writes Jacopo Pitti, 'and every one, of every age and sex, went mad.' All the prisoners, including Machiavelli, who had been arrested for the late conspiracy against the Medici, were released; 'and if it had been possible to give back life to the two who had been beheaded, it is to be believed that this, too, would have been done.' The rejoicings had lasted all through the spring, and reached their culmination on the great Florentine feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, June 24. There were races, storming of a miniature castle in the Piazza della Signoria, bull-fights; but writers, in whom something of the spirit of the *piagnoni* still survived, complained that the spiritual feasts and pageants, with which St. John had been honoured in times past, were left undone.¹ From every city of Italy foreigners flocked to the Tuscan capital, and among them, tired of disappointment and sick at heart after his Roman experiences, was Ariosto. Love came to meet him there. Alessandra di Francesco Benucci, the beautiful young Florentine wife of Tito di Leonardo Strozzi,² was staying in Florence, apparently with her connections, the Vespucci. Messer Lodovico had known her in Ferrara, and had, apparently, conceived an affection for her which he had striven to repress. He now fell madly and rapturously in love with her, and found his passion returned. Ariosto's one great lyric was composed on this occasion. In glowing words and lines of unwonted melody, he paints his former struggles and love's final triumph on the day 'sacred to the Baptist in midsummer':—

'Ne la Tosca città, che questo giorno
 Più riverente honora,
 La fama havea a spettacoli solenni
 Fatto raccor, non che i vicini intorno,
 Ma gli lontani anchora :
 Anchor io vago di mirar vi venni.
 D' altro ch' io vidi, tenni

¹ Cf. Pitti, *Istoria Fiorentina*, p. 110; F. de' Nerli, *Commentari*, p. 124; Giovanni Cambi, *Istorie*, vol. iii. pp. 23-25; Luca Landucci, *Diario Fiorentino*, pp. 335-337, 340.

² This Tito Strozzi held some small office in the service of the Duke of Ferrara. He was only distantly connected with Tito Vespasiano and Ercole Strozzi. See Tables v. and vi. in Litta, *Strozzi di Firenze*.

Poco ricordo, e poco me ne cale :
 Sol mi restò immortale
 Memoria, ch' io non vidi in tutta quella
 Bella città, di voi cosa più bella.

' Voi quivi, dove la paterna chiara
 Origine trahete,
 Da preghi vinta e liberali inviti
 Di vostra gente, con honesta e cara
 Compagnia, a far più liete
 Le feste e a far più splendidi i conviti,
 Con gli doni infiniti
 In ch' ad ogn' altra il Ciel v'ha posta inanzi,
 Venuta erate dianzi,
 Lasciato havendo lamentar indarno
 Il Re de' fiumi, et invidiarvi ad Arno.

' Porte, fenestre, vie, templi, theatri
 Vidi piene di donne
 A giuochi, a pompe, a sacrifici intente :
 E mature et acerbe e figlie e matri,
 Ornate in varie gonne,
 Altre star a conviti, altre agilmente
 Danzare ; e finalmente
 Non vidi, nè sentì ch' altri vedesse,
 Chi di beltà potesse,
 D' honestà, cortesia, d' alti sembianti
 Voi pareggiar, non che passarvi avanti

.
 ' Deh ! dite : come avviene
 Che d'ogni libertà m' havete privo,
 E menato captivo ;
 Nè più mi dolgo ch' altri si dorria
 Sciolto da lunga servitute e ria ?

' Mi dolgo ben, che de' soavi ceppi
 L' ineffabil dolcezza,
 E quanto è meglio esser di voi prigionie
 Che d'altri Re, non più per tempo seppi.
 La libertade apprezza
 Fin che perduta anchor non l'ha il falcone :
 Preso che sia, depone
 Del gire errando sì l'antica voglia,
 Che sempre che si scioglia,
 Al suo signor a render con veloci
 Ale s'andrà, dove udirà le voci.'¹

¹ 'In the Tuscan city, that honours this day most reverently, its fame had gathered to the pageantry its neighbours near and strangers from

Alessandra was very tall and had magnificent golden hair. On this occasion she was dressed in black, her robe was embroidered over with entwined vines, and her brow was encircled by a coronet of jewelled laurel—things in which her poet discerned some hidden sense of amorous mysteries. It is tempting to compare this picture with that of Beatrice as Dante first saw her in the *Vita Nuova*: ‘Apparvemi vestita d’un nobilissimo colore, umile ed onesto sanguigno, cinta ed ornata alla guisa che alla sua giovanissima etade si convenia.’¹ But needless to say that the Ferrarese Court poet, who had already reached his thirty-ninth year and was the father of two sons by other women, did not conceive of love in the spirit of the youthful prophet-poet of Florence. His minor poems afford ample evidence that he loved sincerely and passionately, but that it was more in the spirit of a Catullus or a Propertius than in that of Petrarca. Apart from her great physical beauty, we know very little of Alessandra’s qualities. She is said to have stimulated Lodovico to complete his *Orlando*, and to have induced him to send her one canto revised each month. Her sweet pre-

afar. Even I, desirous to witness, came thither. Of what else I saw, I remembered little and little do I reckon; only there remained to me an immortal memory, that in all that fair city I saw no fairer thing than you.

‘Thither, whence you draw your illustrious paternal origin, you had come just before, induced by the prayers and hospitable invitation of your kindred, with dear and modest company, to make the festivities more joyous and the banquets more splendid, with the infinite gifts in which Heaven has made you excel all others; having left the king of rivers to lament in vain and envy Arno for you.

‘Gates, windows, ways, temples, theatres, I saw full of ladies, bent on sport, on society, or hearing Mass; old and young, daughters and mothers, adorned in various robes; some at banquets, some gracefully dancing; but, in fine, I saw not, nor perceived that others saw, any one who could equal you in beauty, in modesty, courtesy, and noble semblance, much less surpass you.

‘Ah! tell me: How befalls it that you have deprived me of every liberty and led me captive; and yet I grieve no more than another would at release from long and cruel captivity?

‘I grieve indeed that I knew not long before the infinite sweetness of gentle fetters, and how much better it is to be your prisoner than another’s king. The falcon prizes liberty, as long as he has not yet lost it. When he is taken, he so lays down his old desire to roam and wander, that, whenever he is loosed, he will go to yield him to his master with swift wings, where he shall hear his call.’

¹ ‘She appeared unto me robed in a most noble colour, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned in the fashion that becomed her very youthful age’ (*V. N.*, §2).

sence is felt, though unseen, in the background of the great poem:—

‘ Chi salirà per me, Madonna, in cielo
A riportarne il mio perduto ingegno,
Che, poi ch’usci da’ bei vostri occhi il telo
Che ’l cor mi fisse, ognihor perdendo vegno ?
Nè di tanta iattura mi querelo,
Pur chè non cresca, ma stia a questo segno ;
Ch’io dubito, se più si va sciemandò,
Di venir tal qual ho descritto Orlando.

‘ Per rihaver l’ingegno mio m’è aviso
Che non bisogna che per l’aria io poggi
Nel cerchio de la Luna o in Paradiso ;
Chè ’l mio non credo che tanto alto alloggi.
Ne’ bei vostri occhi e nel sereno viso,
Nel sen d’avorio e alabastrini poggi,
Se ne va errando ; et io con queste labbia
Lo corrò, se vi par ch’io lo rihabbia.’¹

There is something in this great love of Ariosto’s, when youth was already passed, that reminds us of our own English romantic poet Spenser, who was already forty-two when he hymned his Elizabeth in the *Epithalamion*. And, in their epics, the Italian and the Englishman have chosen an analogous method of celebrating the ladies of their hearts, though each with a certain characteristic difference. In the *Faerie Queene*, on Mount Acidale, Sir Calidore, the Knight of Courtesy, sees Colin Clout—who is, of course, Spenser himself—piping to the three Graces with their hundred lily-white maidens dancing round them, and in the midst, she that ‘seem’d all the rest in beauty to excell,’ is Colin’s own love, ‘there advaunst to be another Grace.’² In the *Orlando Furioso*, the Paladin Rinaldo, in an Italian palace on the banks of the Po, is

¹ ‘ Who will ascend for me, my lady, to heaven to bring back thence my lost wits, which, since from your fair eyes issued the dart that pierced my heart, I keep losing every hour? Nor do I complain of so great a loss, provided it increase not, but keep at this stage; for I fear, if they go on diminishing, I shall become like what I have described Orlando.

‘ To have back my wits I understand that I need not mount through the air into the circle of the Moon or to Paradise; for I think not that mine dwell so high. In your fair eyes and peaceful face, in your ivory bosom and alabaster breasts, they go wandering; and I with these lips will gather them, if you think fit I have them back’ (*Orlando Furioso*, xxxv. 1-2).

² Book vi. Canto x.

shown a marvellously rich and goodly fountain with eight statues of the noblest and most beautiful women of the Renaissance; seven of them have each two courtly poets carved beneath her, singing her praises and bearing her up to the heaven of Fame. There is Lucrezia Borgia attended by Antonio Tebaldeo and Ercole Strozzi; Isabella d'Este Gonzaga, honoured by the Mantuans, Giovan Jacomo Calandra and Giovan Jacomo Bardelone; Elisabetta Gonzaga da Montefeltro and Leonora Gonzaga della Rovere, the two Duchesses of Urbino, with Jacopo Sadoletto and Pietro Bembo, Baldassare Castiglione and Giovanni Muzio Arelio; the tempest-tossed of Fortune, Lucrezia d'Este Bentivoglio, with Camillo Paleotto and Guido Postumo Silvestri; Diana d'Este de' Contrari, the daughter of the elder Sigismondo, whose praises are sung by Celio Calcagnini and Marco Cavallo; the lost Duchess of Milan, Beatrice d'Este Sforza, with Niccolò da Correggio and Timoteo Bendedei. Between Lucrezia Borgia and Beatrice, Rinaldo sees a tall lady of surpassing grace and beauty¹ borne up by one single poet; these two alone are unnamed, but they are clearly none other than Alessandra and her Lodovico.

Ariosto lingered some six months in Florence in this newly found happiness, rejoicing in the society of Alessandra and in the wonderful series of festivities that filled the city. He acquired a love of Florence and an affection for everything Florentine which he never lost, and which stood him in good stead in later years. At the same time he was finishing his *Orlando Furioso*, and perfecting himself in the Tuscan idiom. He appears to have been the guest of Alessandra's kinsman by marriage, Niccolò di Simone Vespucci, who was a person of importance in the order of the Knights of Jerusalem, and with whom, according to Simone Fornari, he had contracted friendship in his youth at the Court of Ercole. Fornari tells us that Ariosto was at that time particularly engaged upon the battle between Zerbino and Mandricardo in Canto xxiv. of

¹ 'Che sotto puro velo, in nera gonna,
Senza oro e gemme, in un vestire schietto,
Tra le più adorne non pareva men bella
Che sia tra l' altre la Cyprigna stella' (*Orl. Fur.*, xlii. 93-95).

Alessandra was evidently already a widow when these lines were written.

the *Orlando*—a canto, for the rest, in which love takes a nobler aspect than anywhere else in the poem—and that then he had occasion to make *quella vaga comparazione* of the red streamlets of blood over the shining armour of the wounded Zerbino to a purple ribbon dividing a silver ground in his lady's embroidery :—

‘Così talhora un bel purpureo nastro
Ho veduto partir tela d'argento,
Da quella bianca man più ch'alabastro
Da cui partire il cor spesso mi sento.’¹

‘The poet,’ writes Fornari, probably according to what he had heard from Gabriele or Virginio, ‘stayed for the space of six months in the house of his friend, and he used to rise in the middle of the night to compose. Many times would he make his servant Giovanni, who was from Pescia, whom he names in the satire to Messer Galasso, fetch pen and paper; and then in the morning, all hot and contented with himself because of his new composition which arried him greatly, he would show to Vespucci what he had written.’²

Towards the end of the year, Ariosto returned to Ferrara, whither Alessandra had probably preceded him. It is not by any means clear what were the relations between these two at this epoch; but it seems certain that by 1515, at the latest, she was left a widow, and was in somewhat straitened circumstances. It is inevitable to connect with this new love for Alessandra the fact that one of Ariosto's first acts on returning to Ferrara was to see his former mistress, Orsolina Catinelli (the mother of his Virginio), respectably married. In February, 1514, Orsolina married a certain Malacisio, son of Lodovico Malacisi, an inhabitant of Ficarolo, who was a petty official of the Commune of Ferrara. Ariosto gave her a

¹ ‘So sometimes have I seen a fair purple ribbon divide cloth of silver, by that hand whiter than alabaster by which I often feel my heart divided.’

² Lodovico had business to transact in Florence with Giovanni di Guido Antonio Vespucci, in the name of Rinaldo Ariosti, concerning moneys lent to the latter from the bank of Pier Francesco de' Medici (G. Uzielli, *Vita di Amerigo Vespucci scritta da Angelo Maria Bandini*, Florence, 1898, p. 80). Though Fornari does not explicitly identify Alessandra with the lady (whom he calls a *cognata* of Niccolò Vespucci) with whom Ariosto fell in love at Florence, Uzielli seems to me to have failed to disprove the generally accepted tradition, which is confirmed by the internal evidence as well as the chronology of the poet's works and references to her.

dowry of six hundred *lire marchesane*, partly in money, partly in goods (including a house in the Contrada San Michele of Ferrara), and continued to take a friendly interest in her husband and herself after she went to live away from the city at Ficarolo.¹

Notwithstanding this liberality, Ariosto had returned to Ferrara to find himself in a hopeless position. His apparent liberty of the last two or three years was due to the fact that Ippolito had not been paying him his salary. The Cardinal had urged him to become a priest, and he had definitely refused—more than ever alien to the idea now that a new and overpowering love had shone upon his path; to the Cardinal's injunction to join him at Rome, he had answered that he simply had not the means. He was also heavily in debt. His cousin, Alfonso di Bonifazio Ariosti (the same whose name still appears on the dedication page of one of the noblest books of the epoch, the *Cortegiano* of Baldassare Castiglione), wrote a forcibly worded letter to Ippolito on his behalf, a month after Orsolina's marriage, explaining Lodovico's condition and urging him to give the poet some income that did not come from ecclesiastical benefices. 'I pray your Lordship to do in this as you can or think fit, but kindly let me know if you would take it ill if the said Messer Lodovico accepted service with some one else, since he is quite determined not to become a priest; for, as a matter of fact, I know that an offer has been made him, but I know also that he will not find it a great thing, and, above all, I would not have him displease your Lordship in anything.'²

The Cardinal seems to have been sufficiently impressed by this hint to pay his poet the annual expenses of his living and maintenance for the rest of the time that he remained in his service, and he probably used his influence with the Pope to get him satisfied in another matter, which appears to have turned up at this moment.

We have already met Ariosto's friend, Giovanni Fusari, the aged Archpriest of Santa Agata, an *arcipretura* in the diocese of Faenza. By a brief of July 31, 1513 (which, however, was

¹ G. Pardi, *Un' amante dell' Ariosto*.

² Letter dated March 28, 1514. Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 18.

not actually sent), the Pope had granted the reservation of this, together with one or more other benefices, to a certain Andrea de' Guidoni of Modena, a member of his own household.¹ The poor old man, wild with terror, took it into his head that Messer Andrea (of whom, for the rest, we know nothing that is not to his credit) would probably hasten his end to get the benefice, and implored Ariosto to take the dangerous church off his hands. Thus the poet to his brother Galasso, some three years later, reminding him of how he had got involved in the matter:—

‘Sai ben che ’l vecchio la riserva havendo .
 Inteso di un costì, che la sua morte
 Bramava, e di velen perciò temendo,
 Mi pregò ch’ a pigliar venissi in corte
 La sua rinuncia, che potria sol torre
 Quella speranza, onde temea sì forte.
 Opra feci io che sì volesse porre
 Ne le tue mani, o d’Alessandro, il cui
 Ingegno da la chierca non abhorre ;
 Ma nè di voi, nè di più giunti a lui
 D’amicitia, fidar unqua si volle ;
 Io fuor de tutti scelto unico fui.’²

Whether Messer Lodovico actually went to Rome for the purpose, we do not know. Anyway, a bull of Pope Leo granting the parish church and archpresbytery of Santa Agata in the diocese of Faenza ‘to our beloved son Lodovico Ariosto, cleric of Ferrara, the familiar and continual companion of our beloved son Ippolito, Cardinal Deacon of Santa Lucia in Silice,’ was duly issued, dated June 8, 1514. Santa Agata brought in three hundred golden ducats a year, about sixty pounds of current English money. We have already seen that such a benefice would normally bring with it the obligation of taking priest’s orders within a year; but the poet had already

¹ *Leonis X. P. M. Regesta*, ed. Hergenröther, fasc. ii. p. 232.

² ‘Thou knowest well that the old man, having heard of the reservation got by one in Rome who desired his death, and therefore dreading poison, Prayed me to come to Court to take his renunciation, which could alone do away with that hope from which he feared so much.

‘I did my best that he would place it in thy hands, or in those of Alessandro, whose disposition does not shrink from the tonsure;

‘But neither you, nor those more bound to him in friendship, would he ever trust. Out of all I alone was chosen’ (*Satire* ii, 130-141).

probably obtained the dispensation, *de non promovendo ad sacros ordines*, from Leo when Legate of Bologna—and doubtless something of these three hundred ducats would go to the worthy priest whom Ariosto chose to serve the church of which he was nominally archpriest and rector.¹ Writes the poet to Galasso, who was attached to the Papal Court as a member of the household of Leo's nephew, Cardinal Innocenzo Cibo:—

‘Dunque io darò del capo ne la rete,
 Ch’ io soglio dir che ‘l diavol tende a questi
 Che del sangue di Christo han tanta sete?
 Ma tu vedrai, se Dio vorrà che resti
 Questa chiesa in man mia, darla a persona
 Saggia e sciente e de costumi honesti,
 Che con periglio suo poi ne dispona.
 Io nè pianeta mai nè tunicella
 Nè chierca vuo’ che in capo mi si ponà.’²

And he goes on to say that he is equally resolute against marriage. Neither stole nor ring shall ever bind him. ‘In vain is it, if I am a priest, for me to desire a wife, and, when I take a wife, needs must I quench the desire of being a priest.’ He is too mutable in disposition to bind himself to anything irrevocably. But, as to one of these two alternatives, our poet was clearly protesting too much.

The Cardinal was soon back for a while in Ferrara, and, probably in the autumn of this same year, 1514, Ariosto was induced to go in his train towards Rome. They set out by way of Urbino—‘a light-hearted party,’ as the poet has it, all save himself, who was miserable at his first separation from Alessandra’s presence after that rapture of love in the preceding year. But, in the Furlo passage of the Apennines, Ariosto was suddenly struck down by fever, and compelled to

¹ See V. Rossi, *Lodovico Ariosto e il beneficio di Santa Agata*, where the bull was first printed. Although Rossi has abandoned his original contention as to the date of this Satire (Appendix to Gaspary, II. ii. pp. 299, 300), his article remains of permanent value and importance.

² ‘Shall I then put my head into the net which I am wont to say that the Devil spreads for those who are so thirsty for the blood of Christ?’

‘But thou wilt see, if God wills that this church remain in my hands, me give it to a wise and learned person, one of upright character,’

‘Who will then dispose of it at his peril. I want no chasuble nor surplice nor tonsure ever put upon my head’ (*Satire* ii. 106-114),

stop, probably at Fossombrone. In this little town, on his sick-bed, he composed a *capitolo in terza rima*, addressed to the Cardinal, which is one of the most charming of all his minor poems. Ah, he sings, why did not this fever take me in time to keep me in Ferrara, where it would have been more welcome than ever health to the sick pilgrim left alone on the way far from his native land? This is the least of the punishments that Love has inflicted upon him for his disobedience in thus leaving 'that light in which I have my soul inflamed.' Who knows whether Death is not lying in wait for him? What saint in Heaven will defend him? If he dies here alone, there is no one to weep for him; his mother and sisters are far away; nor can his four brothers follow him to 'the stone that should cover the son by his father's side.' Yet might his lady's eyes still work a miracle and deliver him from death, were she but here:—

'Se pur è mio destin che debbia trarmi
 In scura tomba questa febbre, quando
 Non possa voto o medicina aitar mi;
 Signor, per gratia estrema vi domando
 Che non vogliate de la patria cara
 Che sempre stien le mie reliquie in bando;
 Almen l'inutil spoglie habbia Ferrara;
 E su l' avel, che le terrà sotterra,
 La causa del mio fin si legga chiara:
 —Nè senza morte talpa da la terra,
 Nè mai pesce da l' acqua si disgiunge;
 Nè potè anchor chi questo marmo serra
 Da la sua bella donna viver lunge.'¹

These gloomy prognostications were—fortunately for the world—not fulfilled. Ariosto did not, however, follow his patron further; but, as soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he transacted some business at Pesaro for his friend, the poet-

¹ 'Yet if it is my fate that this fever shall draw me into the dark tomb, when nor prayer nor medicine can help me;

'I ask you, my Lord, as a last favour not to suffer my remains to be for ever banished from my dear native land.

'At least let Ferrara have my useless body; and upon the sepulchre that shall hold it interred let the cause of my end be clearly read:

'Not without death can a mole be taken away from the earth, nor ever a fish from the sea; neither could he whom this marble covers live away from his beautiful lady' (*Capitolo i.*).

physician, Guido Postumo Silvestri,¹ and returned to Alessandra and Ferrara. Here he seems for a while to have been left at peace to work on his *Orlando Furioso*, which he finished in the latter part of 1515.

Virginio Ariosti writes that, whilst his father was engaged upon his poem, the Cardinal told him that he would have much preferred him to have been assiduous in his service. That his most illustrious and reverend Lordship said something of the kind, perhaps on some occasion when the poet pleaded the composition of the *Orlando* as an excuse for not going on some mission or following him to Rome, may be taken as granted, and it clearly rankled in Ariosto's mind when he came to write the Satires.² Nevertheless, the documentary evidence brought to light by Campori proves conclusively that Ippolito took considerable interest in the success of the work, and that his interest took the shape of very tangible assistance. On September 17, 1515, he wrote from Ferrara to the Marquis of Mantua that he wanted a thousand reams of paper from Salò for a book that his servant, Messer Lodovico Ariosto, was about to have printed, and asked his Excellence to order his officials to let the bearer pass with the paper, without payment of duty or any other impediment, until he had the whole quantity needed for this work:—'And your Excellence ought to do it willingly, because you, too, will have your share of pleasure from it; and reading it you will find yourself named with some praise in more than one place, and, although perchance not so highly as to touch the merits of your Excellence, at least as far as the powers of the composer have been able to reach.'³ The Cardinal appears to have borne the expenses of the printing, and to have left to the poet the free possession of all the copies of the work, to dispose of them to the latter's own profit.⁴ Certainly a fairly munificent proceeding on his part.

In April, 1516, the first edition of the *Orlando Furioso* thus saw the light. Ippolito was at Rome at the time; but he arrived at Ferrara on June 7, when he is said to have greeted the expectant poet with the famous question: 'Messer Lodovico,

¹ Baruffaldi, Document 4.

² Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 39, 40.

³ *Satire* i. 97-108.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

where ever did you pick up so much trash?' *Messer Lodovico, dove mai avete trovato tante fanfaluiche?* There are many variations of the expression—*corbellerie* and the rest. Campori has urged good reasons for regarding the whole episode as apocryphal; but the Cardinal may have reasonably considered, after his generosity in the publishing, that he was at least entitled to a jape at the author's expense. Possibly even the 'generous offspring of Hercules, ornament and splendour of our age,' may have been astounded at the adulation lavished upon him in these wonderful octaves, and have let his remark be dictated by an unwonted influx of modesty. Said Shakespeare's Bardolph on a different occasion: 'I did that I did not this seven year before; I blushed to hear his monstrous devices.'

On August 30 of this year, 1516, Ariosto started for Florence on the service of the Cardinal, with two mounted servants, and returned on the 8th of September.¹ Nothing is known of the purpose or result of this mission, which was perhaps to one or other of the surviving Medici—Lorenzo or the Cardinal Giulio.

Ippolito at first did not show himself ungrateful to his glorious adulator. On October 1 of this same year, 1516, he granted to Ariosto the entire office of the chancellery of the Curia of Ferrara and one third of the fruits of that of Milan, for life, and took the necessary steps both at Milan and in the Papal Court to ensure his possession of them, increasing the Milanese benefice to half in the following August.² But Ippolito, in addition to the archbishopric of Milan and the bishopric of Ferrara,³ still retained his bishopric of Zagrab in Hungary. In this September, 1517, he announced his intention of going back to take up his residence in his Hungarian diocese, and ordered Ariosto, among the rest of his household, to accompany him. The poet's consternation at the prospect of being thus separated, perhaps for years, from his beloved Alessandra may well be left to the imagination, and the physicians—Valentino, who was to attend upon the Cardinal,

¹ Campori, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

² Antonio Valeri, *Per una data: notizia ariostesca*. Cf. Documents given by Cappelli, pp. 306-308.

³ The see of Ferrara was not raised to the state of an archbishopric until 1735.

and Guido Silvestri — further assured him that, with his delicate constitution, the climate and customs of Hungary would inevitably cause his death. Messer Lodovico told the Cardinal flatly to his face that he would not go.

‘At this,’ writes Pigna in courtly wise, ‘Monsignor was so indignant that he no more esteemed him as he had done in the past. But, knowing his worth, he very much moderated his anger, which he would have entirely cooled, if the malignity of certain persons had not interposed and made the poet, as it were of his own accord, withdraw himself from the favour of his patron.’¹ This is obviously a later apology for the Cardinal. After sustaining the first burst of his anger, Lodovico never entered his presence again. The Cardinal contemptuously dismissed him from his service, and forced him to resign two of the most lucrative benefices which he had given him—those of Castello San Felice and Santa Maria in Benedellio, both rectories in the diocese of Modena—in favour of a certain Luigi da Mantova and Guido Silvestri respectively.² Lodovico da Bagno and the poet’s youngest brother, Alessandro, accompanied the Cardinal to Hungary. To these two writes the poet, in what should probably be regarded as the first of his seven Satires:—

‘A me, per esser stato contumace
 Di non voler Agria veder nè Buda,
 Che sì ritoglia il suo sì non mi spiace
 (Se ben le miglior penne che in la muda
 Havea rimesse, mi tarpasse), come
 Che da l’ amor e gratia sua mi escluda,
 Che senza fede e senza amor mi nome,
 E che dimostri con parole e cenni
 Che in odio e che in dispetto habbia il mio nome.
 E questo fu cagion ch’io mi ritenni
 Di non gli comparire inanzi mai,
 Dal dì che indarno ad escusar mi vienni.’³

¹ *I Romanzi*, p. 104.

² Baruffaldi, Documents 7, 8, 9.

³ ‘That he should take back his own from me, for having been contumacious in not wishing to see Agram or Buda, does not so displease me

‘(Albeit he clipped me of the best feathers that I had put on in the mew), as that he should exclude me from his love and favour,

‘That he should call me faithless and loveless, and show by words and signs that he holds my name in hate and scorn.

‘And this was why I refrained from ever again appearing before him, from the day that I came in vain to excuse myself’ (*Satire* i. 127-138).

Thus Lodovico Ariosto, a year after the publication of the *Orlando*, had regained his liberty. But he was too poor either to enjoy or to keep it long. Above all, he was by no means secure of the two benefices he still retained; he had not yet received the papal bull concerning his half of the proceeds of the chancery of the Milanese Curia; and he had not paid the taxes due to the Apostolic Camera to ensure that, in the case of the old Archpriest's death, his rights in Santa Agata would be respected. Under these circumstances, in the Advent of 1517, Ariosto decided to go personally to Rome; in the season when 'the Cardinals like serpents change their skins,' donning the violet instead of their usual gorgeous scarlet, and the Tribunal of the Rota, famous for its never-ending causes, reopens:—

'Quando la ruota, che non pur castiga
Ixion rio, si volge in mezo Roma
L'anime a cruciar con lunga briga.'¹

This, then, is the condition depicted in the poetical epistle which Ariosto wrote to his brother Galasso, which (though printed first in modern editions) should probably stand second among his Satires.²

In the modest apartment near San Pietro, which Galasso had doubtless found for him, Ariosto probably spent the latter part of November and December in Rome. There were many there to whom he had just given eternal fame in his *Orlando*—from Pope Leo himself and Cardinal Alessandro Farnese to the *dotta compagnia* that accompanies the latter at the opening of the last canto of the poem. But the greatest spirit of the time had found himself unnamed therein, and, while resenting this in a genial way, was anxious to assure the poet that he bore no malice, and would not pay him back in kind in a forthcoming work of his own. 'I have just read Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*,' writes Machiavelli to Lodovico Alamanni at Rome, in a letter dated December 17 of this year, 1517; 'and verily the poem is all beautiful, and in many places marvellous. If he is there, remember me to him, and tell him

¹ 'When the Wheel, which does not chastise guilty Ixion alone, turns in the midst of Rome, to torment souls with long contest' (*Satire* ii. 7-9).

² Valeri, *op. cit.*, has clearly proved that the traditional date of 1517 is the right one, and that Ariosto really did come to Rome. For the order of the Satires, see Chapter xii.

that I only complain that, after having mentioned so many poets, he has left me behind like a dog, and that he has treated me in that *Orlando* of his as I shall not treat him in my *Asino*.'¹

We have no particulars of this stay of Ariosto's in Rome. Taught by experience, he probably made no very serious attempt to get anything more out of Leo or his Court, save the comparatively small favour for which he had come. He got the bull confirming his Milanese benefice duly issued to him before the end of December, and pledged himself to pay within six months the tax due to the papal chancery for Santa Agata.² Most probably he returned to Ferrara and Alessandra as soon as he had thus got his business off his hands.

Unless the words of the Satire are the mere language of a disappointed man, professing to despise the longed-for prize that is beyond his reach, we must assume that Ariosto had no desire of getting anything permanent at the Papal Court; and it was to prove unnecessary. Duke Alfonso, realising the disgrace to his House that would result if he let the greatest poet of Italy wander to another Court for sustenance and employment, took him into his personal service as a member of his household, in April, 1518, with a monthly salary of seven gold scudi, or twenty-one *lire marchesane*, and with a further provision, paid in money or in kind, according to whether he resided in his own house or not, for the support of three persons and two horses.³

This was the beginning of better days for the poet. The Duke was at once a more generous and less exacting master than the Cardinal. 'In their life and habits,' writes Agostino Mosti, then a boy of thirteen years old in the service of Lucrezia Borgia as page to young Ercole d'Este, 'the conduct of these princes was as different one from another as is day from night.' The Cardinal's Court was all rioting, noise, and

¹ *Lettere familiari di Niccolò Machiavelli*, ed. E. Alvisi, No. 166. Machiavelli had, however, previously dealt somewhat severely with Ariosto's *Suppositi* in his *Discorso intorno alla Lingua*. The Lodovico di Piero Alamanni, to whom this letter is addressed, was the elder brother of the poet Luigi.

² The documents are given by Valeri.

³ The ducal decree, signed by Bonaventura Pistofilo and dated April 23, 1518, is given by Baruffaldi, Document 10, and also in Tiraboschi. Cf. Campori, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

feasting; while Alfonso affected a certain austerity of deportment, and brought up his two elder children, Ercole and the younger Ippolito, with much strictness. He lived for the most part in small rooms in the Corte Vecchia, overlooking the piazza, and had had an elevated passage built across to Ippolito's residence in the Vescovado, over which he could pass in secret to confer with him on matters of State. As in his younger days, Alfonso was much absorbed in his mechanical and artistic pursuits, in embellishing the rooms of the Castello and Corte, in casting cannon. Nor did he neglect or scorn literature. In the evening, besides chess and cards, there would be music and reading of romances. 'Much appreciated in those days,' writes Mosti, 'were the poetry of the Count Matteo Maria Boiardo and the first sketch of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*; and likewise comedies and tragedies were read, which had been recited and presented some years before.'¹ Ariosto was frequently called upon to read aloud to the Duke on these occasions, and Pigna tells us that he read splendidly, bringing out all the finest qualities of the books, and not like a man who takes pleasure in reading for the sake of hearing his own voice.

'With that Duke Alfonso,' writes Mosti, 'one lived very familiarly, but with very great reverence, more in deeds than in fine words.'² Brusque in his manners, brutal and tyrannical at times in his methods and language, he required fidelity and obedience, but dispensed with flattery. When on one occasion, from Migliaro, he had dictated to Bonaventura Pistofilo a letter to his officials at Ferrara so outrageous and bestial that the faithful secretary dared not set down more than a portion of it on paper, and the terrified functionaries tried to appease his fury, he replied: 'We are ready to let you always say your side of the matter, but we also wish to be able to say and to write to you and to the others just what we think fit.'³ And we shall find him addressing Raphael and Titian, when they did not send the pictures they had promised him, in terms of almost despotical insolence. A sovereign, in

¹ *La Vita Ferrarese nella prima metà del secolo decimosesto descritta da Agostino Mosti* (ed. Solerti).

² Agostino Mosti, *loc. cit.*, p. 182.

³ Cappelli, pp. lxiv.-lxvi.

fine, to be feared and respected, but not loved ; but withal a strong man and a great personality.

The poet, however, felt a growing dislike to all the life and surroundings of the Court, and entered the service of Alfonso merely as the least disagreeable way of accepting the inevitable. In his third *Satire*, addressed to his cousin, Annibale Malaguzzi, whom he represents as asking him whether he is better off now than under the Cardinal, he answers frankly that both burdens are equally distasteful to him, and that he still longs for freedom :—

‘Ma poi che figliuol unico non fui,
Nè mai fu troppo a’ miei Mercurio amico,
E viver son sforzato a spese altrui,
Meglio è s’approso il Duca mi nutrico
Che andare a questo e a quel de l’humil volgo,
Accattandomi il pan come mendico.
So ben che dal parer de i più mi tolgo,
Che’l stare in corte stimano grandezza
Che io pel contrario a servitù rivolgo.
Stiaci volentier dunque chi la apprezza ;
Fuor n’uscirò ben io, s’un dì il figliuolo
Di Maia vorrà usarmi gentilezza.’¹

But at least it kept him in Ferrara, left him leisure for his studies, and did not too frequently sever him from Alessandra :—

‘Chi vuole andare a torno, a torno vada :
Vegga Inghelterra, Ongheria, Francia e Spagna :
A me piace habitar la mia contrada.
Visto ho Toscana, Lombardia, Romagna,
Quel monte che divide e quel che serra
Italia, e un mare e l’altro che la bagna.
Questo mi basta ; il resto de la terra
Senza mai pagar l’hoste andrò cercando
Con Ptolomeo ; sia il mondo in pace o in guerra ;
E tutto il mar, senza far voti quando

¹ ‘But since I was not an only son, nor was Mercury ever too friendly to my kin, and I am forced to live at another’s costs,

‘It is better for me to get my sustenance with the Duke than to go to this and that of the humble crowd, seeking my bread like a beggar.

‘I know well that I differ from the view of the most, who esteem life in Court greatness, which I on the contrary convert to servitude.

‘Then let whoso apprizes it stay there willingly ; out of it shall I surely come, if one day the son of Maia be pleased to use me graciously’ (*Satire* iii. 22-33).

Lampeggi il ciel, sicuro in su le carte
 Verrò più che su i legni volteggiando.
 Il servizio del Duca, da ogni parte
 Che ci sia buona, più mi piace in questa,
 Che dal nido natio raro si parte.
 Per questo i studi miei poco molesta,
 Nè mi toglie onde mai tutto partire
 Non posso, perchè il cor sempre ci resta.
 Parmi vederti qui ridere e dire
 Che non amor di patria nè di studi,
 Ma di donna, è cagion che non voglio ire.
 Liberamente te 'l confesso ; hor chiudi
 La bocca ; chè a difender la bugia
 Non volli prender mai spada nè scudi.'¹

¹ 'Let whoso would gad about, gad about : let him see England, Hungary, France and Spain ; it pleases me to dwell in my own district.

'I have seen Tuscany, Lombardy, Romagna, the mountain that divides and that which shuts off Italy, and both the seas that bathe her.

'This is enough for me. The rest of the earth shall I go exploring with Ptolemy, without ever paying a host ; be the world in peace or in war.

'And I shall voyage over all the sea, without making vows when the sky lightens, more safely on the charts than upon ships.

'The service of the Duke, of all respects wherein it is good, pleases me most in this, that it rarely departs from the natal nest.

'Through this it disturbs my studies little, nor takes me from whence I can never wholly depart, because my heart always stays there.

'I think I see thee laugh here, and say that not love of fatherland, nor of studies, but of woman, is the reason that I will not go.

'Freely I confess it to thee ; now keep my secret ; for I never liked to take sword or shield to defend a lie' (*Satire* iii. 55-81).

CHAPTER VI

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE LION

IN the meantime, at Rome, Pope Leo x. had been steadily disappointing the expectations that had been formed of him before his elevation to the Pontificate. 'While he was Cardinal,' writes Pistofilo, 'he had so well dissimulated that he was believed to be half a saint, but he afterwards proved himself quite the contrary.'¹

Surrounded by crowds of needy Florentines and grasping connections of the Medici, adulated by high and low, amusing himself with wretched poetasters like that Camillo Querno whom the Roman Academy crowned with cabbage and laurel, or that Baraballo whom the courtiers led in mock triumph through the streets of Rome mounted upon an elephant, the Sovereign Pontiff delighted in the basest sort of buffoonery supplied him by the notorious Fra Mariano Felti, no less than in the artistic creations of Raphael; his lavishness was rapidly exhausting the papal treasury, which he could only replenish by the most unblushing simony and the most flagrant territorial aggression. While France and Spain were renewing the gigantic struggle in Lombardy, and fresh hordes of Swiss poured down from their mountains to defend the incompetent and helpless young Duke Massimiliano Sforza of Milan, the Pope, allying himself now with one side, now with the other, exhibited the utmost inconstancy and perfidy, openly professing duplicity as a maxim of State policy. 'When you have made a league with any one,' he would say, 'you should keep in constant negotiation with the other party.'

Not entirely base, however, were the Pope's aims and

¹ *Vita di Alfonso d'Este*, cap. xxxvii.

ideals. The son of Lorenzo de' Medici remembered the comparatively free and pacific condition of Italy when his father's policy maintained the balance of power among her greater States, before the treachery of Lodovico Sforza found a channel for the flood of barbarian invasion. In his nobler moments he dreamed of bringing back that golden age. For the liberty of the Church and the independence of Italy, it was absolutely essential not to suffer the duchy of Milan and the kingdom of Naples to be united under one sovereign, be he foreigner or Italian; and to avert this possibility all Leo's tortuous policy was directed, 'in order that the Church may not be enclosed in the dominions of a prince who may be lord of the head and of the tail of Italy, besides his other dominions.' 'This consideration,' wrote Giuliano de' Medici to the Duke of Savoy, 'weighs so much with our Lord, that he would not consent to it even if it were to fall, with the same circumstances, to our own person.'¹ But the Magnifico was overstating the case for his brother. From these greater designs Leo was too constantly distracted and diverted by another ruling passion of his: while himself enjoying the Papacy to the full, to build up, by peaceful means if possible, large States in Italy for his brother and nephew, Giuliano himself and Lorenzo. And these devices soon grew more obvious than the pacific intentions with which he had undoubtedly ascended the papal throne. Within a few months of Leo's election, it was openly said in the Orsini palace of Monte Giordano, where Giuliano as Gonfaloniere of the Church resided when at Rome, that the latter was to be made King of Naples; while the Pope dreamed of forming another kingdom in Northern Italy for Lorenzo, to be united to the government of Florence, comprising Parma and Piacenza, Modena and Reggio, with the subsequent addition of Ferrara and Urbino.² A pretext for an attack upon Ferrara could easily be found (and Alberto Pio, who was now Caesar's orator in Rome, urged the Pope on); while one already existed for the forfeiture of the papal fief of Urbino, in Francesco Maria's murder of Cardinal Alidosi, though this had been condoned by the weak partiality of

¹ Nitti, *Leone X. e la sua Politica*, p. 62 n.

² Cf. Nardi, ii. p. 32; Guicciardini, xii. 3; Villari, *Machiavelli*, iii. pp. 4-8; Nitti, *op. cit.*, pp. 16 *et seq.*

Pope Julius. In the pages of Machiavelli's *Principe*, these grandiose designs acquire a certain fantastic splendour, and are even tinged, in the light cast back upon them from later centuries, with the threefold colours of Italian nationalism, while they live a world-long petrified life in the terrible creations of Michelangelo in the Sagrestia Nuova of San Lorenzo.

By a brief of June 14, 1514, Leo had absolved Alfonso and all his adherents from every censure, annulled Pope Julius's confiscation of Ferrara, approved Pope Alexander's reduction of the tribute, restored the Duke's rights in Cento and Pieve, taken him and his under the apostolic protection, and promised *in fide Pontificis* the free restitution of Reggio within five months—Alfonso simultaneously renouncing all rights over the salt of Comacchio to the Apostolic See.¹ The Duke was in treaty with Maximilian for the restitution of Modena, with which he had been reinvested, when the Pope stepped in and bought all rights over the city from the needy King of the Romans—'who, I could almost say, would sell his own teeth to get money,' writes Pistofilo—for forty thousand ducats. 'When the Cardinal Ippolito remonstrated with him,' continues the faithful secretary, 'the Pope answered that he was trying to rescue the city from the hands of Maximilian, not to keep it for himself, but to restore it to his brother, Duke Alfonso; and, swearing upon his breast as a true priest, he promised that, as soon as he had it, he would restore it to him.'² In December, 1514, Fabiano Lippi of Arezzo arrived at Modena as apostolic commissary, and, after some opposition and delay on the part of Vitfurst, was given peaceable possession. The powerful family of the Rangoni supported the papal régime. In August of the preceding year, 1513, the protonotary Giovanni Gozzadini of Bologna had been made papal governor of Reggio—which city also the Pope, through the Cardinal Ippolito, still promised to restore to Alfonso within five months and that, in the meanwhile, its revenues should be given him. These latter, according to

¹ Muratori, *Delle Antichità Estensi*, ii. pp. 317, 318, where the text of the brief is printed.

² *Vita di Alfonso*, cap. xxxix.; Frizzi, iv. p. 275, says that Alberto Pio was responsible for this selling of Modena.

Pistofilo, the Duke had twice to the amount of some thousands of ducats; but then the payment ceased. More probably, these were mere devices to lull the Duke into security, until the Pope's plans for the conquest of Ferrara were ripe.

The death of Louis XII. on January 1, 1515, brought a new actor upon the European stage in the person of Francis I.—a kind of sixteenth century reincarnation of one of the Paladins of whom Ariosto was singing—as splendid and daring as Orlando, as intolerable a spectacle to the student of humanity as Shelley found the massacres of the Saracens in Ariosto's epic. In him the French claims on Milan were renewed; a fresh alliance was made with Venice. His scouting of the papal demands for the cession to the Holy See of the rights of the French crown on Naples, and the timely surrender by Cardona of Parma and Piacenza, were enough to put the Pope on the side of the League—Maximilian, Spain, Sforza, and Genoa—for the defence of Italy, with the bought arms of the Swiss. By a brief of February 25, Leo invested Giuliano with these two cities and with Modena and Reggio. 'I do not know how much you will draw from Modena,' wrote Bernardo da Bibbiena to the latter, 'we believe twenty thousand ducats.'¹ The stupendous conflict of Marignano shattered these papal dreams—that 'battle of the giants,' as the old Marshal Trivulzio called it, begun in the afternoon of September 13, 1515, and renewed at dawn on the following day, before which the wildest creations of romantic poetry pale—in which the King received knighthood from the hand of Bayard and the Swiss terror was eternally dissipated:—

'Sì che 'l titolo mai più non gli adorna,
Ch' usurpato s'havran quei villan brutti,
Che domator de' principi e difesa
Si nomeran de la Christiana Chiesa.'²

Milan surrendered, and Massimiliano Sforza retired to France as a pensioner of the French King. Parma and

¹ Letter of March 12, 1515. In *Lettere di Principi*, i. p. 32.

² 'So that the title never more adorns them, which those ill-favoured rustics shall have usurped, who will style themselves subduers of princes and defence of the Christian Church' (*Orl. Fur.* xxxiii. 43).

Piacenza followed the example of Milan. Passing over to the side of the conqueror, Leo met the Most Christian King at Bologna in December, and entered into treaty with him. The Pope had definitely to abandon Parma and Piacenza to France, and to promise to restore Modena and Reggio to Duke Alfonso, who was to pay back the ducats that had been given to the King of the Romans and the papal expenses in these two cities. But he steadfastly refused to pardon Francesco Maria della Rovere, who had failed to march his troops to aid the papal forces against the French in Lombardy, and upon whose behalf the King had half-heartedly intervened. Alfonsina Orsini, young Lorenzo's ambitious mother, the Pope's sister-in-law, was bent upon having Francesco Maria's duchy for her son, who had played a prominent part in these negotiations between Leo and King Francis.

To this papal design of the conquest of Urbino, Giuliano de' Medici had shown himself consistently opposed, 'remembering with grateful mind,' writes Nardi, 'the benefits and honours which formerly, in the time of his unhappy fortunes, he had received in the Court of Guidobaldo and then from the said Francesco Maria, his nephew and successor'—in those golden days eternalised by Castiglione when Giuliano, in the debates of the *Cortegiano*, had played the part of the chivalrous defender of women in the *feltrisca corte*:—

'Ove col formator del Cortigiano,
Col Bembo e gli altri, sacri al divo Apollo,
Facea l'esilio suo men duro e strano.'¹

With his bride, Filiberta of Savoy (sister of the Duke of Savoy and of the mother of the King of France), Giuliano had received the duchy of Nemours. His character is more that of a modern decadent than of a child of the Renaissance. Sensual and mystical at the same time, he was fantastically superstitious, curiously striving to peer into the mysteries of the future; but withal a not ignoble spirit, the best and most genial of the Medici, whom the Florentines loved as much as they hated his nephew Lorenzo. Broken down by sexual

¹ 'Where with him who formed the Courtier, with Bembo and the others, consecrated to divine Apollo, he made his exile less hard and strange' (*Sat.* iii. 93-95).



PIETRO BEMBO. MEDALS BY VALERIO BELLI AND PASTORINO
DE' PASTORINI.

perversions, seeking in vain for refuge in mysticism, he died in March, 1516—perhaps not in all things unworthy of the superb canzone which Messer Lodovico dedicated to his memory. ‘Two days before he died,’ reported Marino Giorgi to the Venetian Senate, ‘he called the Pope, and besought him not to do any harm to the Duke of Urbino nor deprive him of his State, seeing that his House had received so much kindness from him after their expulsion from Florence; and he prayed the Pope for this grace; but his Holiness said: “Giuliano, attend to getting well”; nor would he make any promise to him, adding: “It is not the time to speak of these things.” And this he did because, on the other side, Lorenzino was constantly urging him to take away the State from that Duke.’¹

The Pope had now a free hand. Francesco Maria was summoned to appear in Rome before April 2, to answer for his crimes, and in particular for the murder of Cardinal Alidosi and his alleged rebellious conduct in not having sent his forces to swell the papal army under Lorenzo de’ Medici in Lombardy. In vain did the Dowager Duchess Elisabetta almost force her way into the Pope’s presence to beg for mercy for her nephew. Leo was inexorable. Francesco Maria was solemnly excommunicated and deprived of his States. In May, the duchy was invaded from all sides by the papal forces and conquered with scarcely any resistance, the fortress of San Leo alone holding out until the end of September. In August, the Pope invested Lorenzo de’ Medici with the duchy of Urbino.

Francesco Maria sent his little boy Guidobaldo, his wife Leonora, and Elisabetta for safety to Mantua, and finally followed them. Of Guidobaldo, who was afterwards to be associated by ties of friendship and admiration with Ariosto, Ippolito Calandra wrote to young Federico Gonzaga (who in France was striving his utmost to induce the Most Christian King to take up the cause of the Della Rovere): ‘He is the most gentle and pleasant lord in the world. He says the grandest things that would be sufficient in a grown man. “By my faith,” he says, “if Pope Leo had come by himself, he would never have taken the State of the Lord my father”;

¹ Alberi, series II. vol. iii. p. 51; cf. Nitti, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-32.

and some other things at which every one marvels, considering his very youthful age, for he is not more than twenty-six months old.'¹

But in January, 1517, with Spanish mercenaries and a force of Italian volunteers under Federigo Gonzaga da Bozzolo, Francesco Maria renewed the war. He easily retook Urbino, and carried on the contest against Lorenzo, who was severely wounded in the siege of Mondolfo, and Cardinal Bibbiena who accompanied the papal army in the capacity of legate, until September, when, practically deserted by his Spanish soldiery, he was forced to agree to a capitulation by which he surrendered his duchy to the Holy See.² Morally, what little glory was won in the campaign between the rival dukes was all Francesco Maria's. Lorenzo had refused a challenge to meet his rival in single combat, and his wound had served as a convenient excuse to leave the field. A Ferrarese soldier, Rosso della Malvasia, serving in the papal ranks, who overcame a boastful Spanish mercenary in a duel, is perhaps the Paladin exalted in a sonnet, which may be Ariosto's, as a champion of Italy against the treacherous barbarians.³

In the meanwhile, the Pope showed no signs of restoring Modena and Reggio to Duke Alfonso. The papal governors of both cities were more or less incompetent. Factions raged furiously; the Bebbi fought the Scaioli in the streets of Reggio, no longer *il giocondo*; in Modena, Gherardo Rangone, with the Tassoni and Grillenzoni, opposed Francesco Rangone, who was supported by the Carandini. In the time of Fabiano Lippi, wrote a contemporary, 'Modena became a den of thieves, because there was no justice done there'; Count Gian Pietro Gonzaga of Novellara and Count Giovanni Boiardo stirred up the flames at Reggio. In June, 1516, the

¹ Letter of June 8, 1516. Luzio and Renier, *Mantova e Urbino*, pp. 227, 228.

² There is a vivid account of this last phase of the war in Dennistoun, *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino*, ii. pp. 357-386. Cf. Ugolini, *Storia dei Conti e Duchi di Urbino*, ii. pp. 207-222. Frizzi (iv. p. 280) states that in July, when 14,000 Swiss or German mercenaries were passing in ships along the Po through the Ferrarese, in pay of Lorenzo and the Pope, Alfonso gave them provisions for three days.

³ Sonnet xxx. in Polidori, first published as Ariosto's by Baruffaldi. Cf. Agostino Mosti, p. 181, and the somewhat different story in Dennistoun, ii. pp. 370, 371.

Pope recalled Lippi from Modena; on June 28, 1517, the Bebbi and their allies murdered Gozzadini, who was personally a well-intentioned, inoffensive man, at Mass in the Duomo of Reggio.¹

By a brief of April 5, 1516, Leo appointed Francesco Guicciardini papal commissary in Modena and its district with full powers and authority. At the end of the year, he appointed him governor of Reggio as well, and he entered that city in July, 1517, a few days after the murder of the unfortunate Gozzadini.

Alike in Modena and Reggio, Guicciardini's rule was an emphatic success. Even the Rangoni were forbidden to bear arms. The factions were sternly repressed, but with no unnecessary cruelty or severity; the formidable bandits of the mountainous regions were hunted down and put to death. A general reconciliation of the Guelfs and Ghibellines was temporarily effected in Reggio; public works of considerable utility were effectively carried out in Modena. 'I shall not fail,' wrote Guicciardini to Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, 'as to what is in my power, that is, to do justice universally and with integrity, not to be partial, but to use all the diligence and vigilance possible to me.'²

Hearing that the Pope was sending an envoy to France to turn the French King against him, Alfonso, in December, 1516, despatched Bonaventura Pistofilo to Francis, armed with Leo's own brief of 1515 in which he had promised to restore the two cities, to urge the King to compel him to keep his word. A new European coalition was in the formation, and the Duke wished to make his own position, as an ally of France, secure. Francis received Pistofilo very graciously, and was profuse in promises. He had learned, he said, to rely upon the Duke more than upon any one else in Italy, and he would never abandon his protection of him. 'I thank God,' he said, 'that my affairs are in such a state that the Pope will not dare to fail me nor to provoke me; and I shall put fresh pressure upon him for the restitution of Modena

¹ The whole story of his death is told, with horrible details, by Panciroli, ii. pp. 136-148.

² Letter dated Reggio, July 25, 1517. *Opere Inedite*, vol. vii., Letter lvi.

and Reggio, as he has promised me. And the Lord Duke my cousin need not fear that I shall ever abandon him or leave him to the mercy of others.' The Admiral (Bonnivet) told him that his Majesty was so well disposed to favour the Duke that all intercession would be superfluous. 'Write in my name,' said he, 'to his Lordship that he may be assured of being Duke of Ferrara, of Modena, and of Reggio, if the King be Duke of Milan and King of France.'¹

The Ferrarese question rested in abeyance for the next year: 'Only the Duke,' writes Pistofilo, 'who on many grounds had perceived and understood the bad disposition of Pope Leo against him, attended with diligence to guarding himself from his snares.'² In the following March, 1518, Duke Lorenzo, the Medici destined by his uncle and perhaps by Machiavelli to renew the triumphs of Cesare Borgia, went ceremoniously to Amboise to marry his royal French bride, Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne. He had a magnificent reception, and stood godfather to the Dauphin; but already the seeds of disease had been sown in him; wasted by debauchery, compelled to rule the Florentines in a more or less constitutional fashion, the Pope's hopes in his handsome but incapable nephew—the last legitimate male descendant of the great Lorenzo—were destined to be soon cut short. In November, Duke Alfonso himself started for France, having been summoned by Francis to spend Christmas and to be present at the Court in Paris when the alliance (the 'treaty of universal peace,' which had been signed in London in October) was proclaimed between the Most Christian King and Henry VIII. of England. The splendour of his appearance and the magnificence of his retinue made an impression upon the French courtiers. Bonaventura Pistofilo, who accompanied him, wrote a long account to Lucrezia Borgia of a state ball and supper given by the King in honour of the English ambassadors. To the modern reader, the most interesting item in the letter is the sudden reappearance upon the scenes of Juan Borgia, that mysterious young bastard

¹ Letters from Bonaventura Pistofilo to Duke Alfonso, dated Amboise, December 10 and December 14, 1516. *Vita di Alfonso d'Este*, Letters vii. and viii.

² *Ibid.*, cap. xliii.

whom Pope Alexander had once cynically declared to be his own son, but who, though now passing officially as Lucrezia's brother, may possibly have been her own child by that luckless Pierotto whom Cesare had butchered:—

'The most illustrious Lord Duke has presented the illustrious Lord Don Giovanni to the King, in the presence of Monseigneur de la Trémoille and the Master of the Horse; and he was welcomed and accepted by his Majesty, whose hand he kissed; but, because the King was busied in this affair (of the ambassadors), he has not presented your Excellence's letter to him, nor spoken more on the subject. When I spoke to him this evening, the Duke told me that he means to present him to the Queen and to Madama; I have reminded his Excellence that Don Giovanni's reception and prospects here may depend upon the degree of esteem that he professes to have for him. His Lordship says that he wishes to lend him every favour, but complains that he is too cold. On the other hand, I have suggested to the Lord Don Giovanni himself what seemed to me to be to the point.'¹

Whether Lucrezia's half-brother or her unacknowledged son, Duke Alfonso's intervention on the youth's account is certainly to his own credit. It was, indeed, the last act of kindness that he was able to show his wife.

The Duke's policy was now to affect the utmost devotion towards the Pope and the friendliest feelings for all the Medici. On his return to Ferrara in February, he despatched Ariosto (who had not been one of the members of his household who accompanied him to France) to Florence, to inquire after the health of Lorenzo, to visit him and his wife, the Cardinal Giulio and Madonna Alfonsina, in his name, and to express the utmost affection towards the whole Medicean family. Ariosto—who was probably the only man in Italy, outside their immediate circle, who had any real sympathy with and liking for the Medici—acquitted himself with courtly

¹ Letter from Pistofilo to the Duchess Lucrezia, dated Paris, December 23, 1518. *Ibid.*, Letter xi. Juan Borgia appears to have come to the Court of Ferrara from Naples at the end of 1517. Cf. L. N. Cittadella, *Saggio di Albergo Genealogico e di memorie su la famiglia Borgia* (Turin, 1872), pp. 46-49; Gregorovius, *Lucrezia Borgia*, p. 323. The 'Madama' in the letter is the King's mother, Louise of Savoy.

dexterity, and returned to his master with a letter from the Cardinal, dated Poggio Caiano, February 26, 1519, in which Giulio assured his Excellence that he was sorry that he had taken the trouble of sending Messer Lodovico, as such ceremonies were really quite unnecessary between them. As to the Duke's visit to the Most Christian King, 'Messer Pier Antonio Torello, your chancellor,' wrote the Cardinal, 'has shown me all that your Excellence has written to him about the results and cause of your going to France, and, albeit it is unnecessary, he has nevertheless wished to demonstrate all the faith and love that you have towards our Lord (the Pope) and all of us; and we are most certain that your going and every other action of yours will never aim at anything save what is good and excellent, and what tends to the benefit and praise of his Holiness.'¹

Death was to be busy among the Courts of Italy this year, 1519. The Marquis of Mantua, Gian Francesco Gonzaga, died in March, leaving Isabella a widow; he was succeeded by their gallant, handsome, and lascivious young son, Federigo, the *puttino* of her family letters. At the end of April, Duke Lorenzo's young French wife, Madeleine, died, after giving birth to the daughter destined in after years to acquire dark notoriety as Caterina de' Medici. Ariosto was at once sent to Florence from Ferrara to bear the Duke's sympathy to Lorenzo; he arrived on May 4, only to find that Lorenzo himself had died that morning.

'I have just arrived in Florence at the nineteenth hour,' he wrote to Alfonso, 'and have found that the Duke of Urbino died this morning. I am greatly perplexed as to what I am to do; for, if I am to go to offer condolence for the death of the Duchess, I know not to whom—especially as it seems to me that the death of the Duke is of such importance that it has made the loss of the Duchess forgotten. Finally, I have decided to wait for a new commission from your Excellence, and, in the meanwhile, to keep out of sight with Messer Pietro Antonio, in order that, if you wish me to condole with the Cardinal de' Medici or with the Cardinal

¹ Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-45. In addition to his two secretaries, the Duke had four or six chancellors, who frequently acted as temporary ambassadors or special envoys.

de' Rossi, of whom one or the other is expected to-day or to-morrow, I can fulfil both offices. And also, if your Excellence should wish me only to do that for which I was sent, I can say that I had come to condole for the death of the Duchess, but, having seen this new misfortune, I have kept back in order not to be importunate. So let your Excellence advise me what I am to do; and, if I am wrong in not doing what was committed to me, you must pardon me; for I have acted for the best.'¹

Alfonso promptly instructed him to condole with the Cardinal Giulio, who had hurried from Rome (he was Vice-chancellor of the Church as well as Archbishop of Florence) to secure the government of Florence, on the deaths of both Duke and Duchess—which the poet did, together with Torello, and was back in Ferrara by the 16th of the month.²

A few days later, on June 24, 1519, died the most mysterious woman of the age, Lucrezia Borgia, after giving birth to a dead child. From her death-bed, she dictated a pathetic letter, almost beautiful in its perfect simplicity, to the Pope—believing, perhaps, that the words of one on the brink of the grave might be listened to by him on her husband's behalf. 'Our most merciful Creator,' she wrote, 'has vouchsafed to let me know that I am come to the end of my life, and I feel that within a few hours I shall be out of it, having, however, first received all the holy Sacraments of the Church. And at this moment as a Christian, albeit a sinner, I have remembered to beseech your Beatitude to deign to give some indulgence, from your spiritual treasury, with your holy benediction to my soul; and so do I devoutly pray you. And into your holy Grace I commend my Lord Consort and my children, all servants of your Beatitude.'³

'It has pleased our Lord God,' wrote Duke Alfonso to his nephew, the Marquis Federigo Gonzaga, 'to call to Himself in this hour the soul of the most illustrious Lady Duchess, my dearest Consort. I cannot but communicate this to your Excellence by our mutual love, whence comes it that I esteem the pleasures and the adversities of the one to belong also

¹ Letter xiv., dated Florence, May 4.

² Campori, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

³ Letter of June 22, 1519. Gregorovius, Document 59.

to the other; nor can I write it without tears, so grievous to me is it to see myself deprived of so sweet and dear a companion, as she was to me by reason of her gracious ways and the tender love that there was between us. In this bitter sorrow, I should ask for help of consolation from your Excellence; but I know that you will have your own part of grief therein, and it will be dearer to me to have one to accompany me with weeping than one to console me.¹

Lucrezia was buried in her favourite convent of the nuns of the Corpus Domini, in the same tomb as her husband's mother, Leonora of Aragon. 'All this town greatly laments her death,' wrote Giovanni Gonzaga, who represented his nephew, the Marquis of Mantua, at the funeral, 'and above all his ducal Excellence, who verily shows that he has had singular grief of heart thereat. And here great things are said of her life, and that for perhaps ten years till now she wore a hair shirt, and for the last two years she confessed every day, and communicated three or four times in the month.'² The name of this golden-haired swayer of men's hearts had been in her youth the mark for all the cynical suggestions of a corrupt age, the butt of the obscenely virulent malice of those who knew no better way to avenge the wrongs done by the father and brother than by blackening the name of the daughter and sister; nor may one dare to assert that she had kept herself untainted from the river of blackest filth that surged round the Vatican, when Pope Alexander sat upon the Throne of the Fisherman. But the spotlessness of her later life, her charity to the poor, her devotion to the cause of the husband who had married her most unwillingly and to the people who had at first regarded the marriage as a disgrace to their ruling House, the universal respect and affection that she won for herself, are no less certain. 'The good Duchess was a pearl in the world,' wrote Bayard's faithful chronicler, who saw her when she received Alfonso's French allies; 'neither in her time nor before it, was there

¹ Letter dated Ferrara, June 24, 1519, at the fifth hour of night. Zucchetti, *Lucrezia Borgia, Duchessa di Ferrara*, p. 23.

² Zucchetti, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 24, where it is suggested that this *cilizio* that she wore was nothing more than the cord of St. Francis, of whose order Lucrezia was a tertiary.

ever found a more triumphant princess ; for she was beautiful, good, sweet, and courteous to all. She spoke Spanish, Greek, Italian, French, and a little very good Latin, and composed in all these languages. It is certain that, albeit her husband was a wise and hardy prince, this lady, by her good grace, rendered him many great and good services.¹ Reading through her extant letters, especially those written in her closing years, we are tempted to conclude that the downfall of her House in Italy, the sudden deaths of her father and brother, was not without its influence in impelling her thoughts towards religion. Gradually we find her taking the same place in the spiritual life of Ferrara that her father-in-law, Duke Ercole, had held, and even continuing his work in the curious by-paths of mysticism, that seemed still to lead to the convent of Santa Caterina da Siena even after the downfall of the Beata Lucia.² It is with perfect sincerity that we find her, in a letter to Isabella d' Este, thanking God that He has called three of her maids-of-honour to serve Him as sisters of the Dominican order of Penance in that holy house.

Lucrezia left four children by Alfonso. Besides Ercole and the younger Ippolito (destined to be the fourth Duke and second Cardinal, respectively, of Ferrara), born in 1508 and 1509, there were two much younger children, born in 1515 and 1516: Leonora, who became a nun in the convent of the Corpus Domini, and Francesco, who, says Agostino Mosti, 'was the greatest delight of his father, especially after the death of Madama the Duchess, his mother.' Another son, Alessandro, born after Ippolito, had died in childhood. 'The poor little one last night rendered his blessed soul to our Lord God about the fourth hour,' wrote Lucrezia to the Marchesana Isabella, 'and has left me much afflicted and full of immense sorrow, as your most illustrious Ladyship can easily believe, being a woman and tender mother; I know that you will have compassion for me, and that you will have prayers offered to Our Lord that He may give me strength, so that I may be able patiently to bear this perturbation of soul and

¹ *Le Loyal Serviteur*, chap. xlv.

² Cf. *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara*, p. 466; Zucchetti, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20.

stroke of fortune. And what not a little afflicts me is that I understand that the most illustrious Lord Duke, my consort, is very greatly grieved at this.'¹

After Lucrezia's death, Alfonso took a beautiful young Ferrarese woman of the people, Laura Eustochia Dianti, for mistress, whom Faustini calls a 'wench of most lofty spirit,' as indeed she appears in her portrait by Titian, where she is seen wearing a turban, with her left hand resting upon the shoulder of a negro page. Alfonso built for Laura a small palace that still stands in the Borgo degli Angeli; but, in spite of the assertions of Ferrarese historians to the contrary, it is quite certain that he never married her. She bore him two sons, Alfonso and Alfonsino. Although ousted by the Pope from the succession of Ferrara, it was Laura's descendants, and not Lucrezia's, who were destined to sit upon the ducal seat of Modena and Reggio for two centuries, and who gave a Queen to England.

In July came the turn of the Ariosti. Rinaldo di Francesco, the poet's first cousin and head of the family (the extravagance and display of whose third wife, the high-born Contarina Farnese, is hinted at in Lodovico's satire on marriage), died on the 7th of that month. He had been closely bound by ties of service and friendship to the Gonzagas, and Lodovico's letters have been preserved in which he informs Federigo and the Marchesana Isabella of the event.² As the deceased Count had no male heirs, the poet and his brothers laid claim to his inheritance, which included a valuable and extensive estate near Bagnolo, which had been granted to Rinaldo's father, the seneschal Francesco Ariosti, by Ercole I. Of this they took peaceable possession; but, a few days later, were forcibly dispossessed of it by the Duke's factor general, Alfonso Trotti (the son of that Brandeligi Trotti previously mentioned), who claimed it for the Camera Ducale as a vacant fief. An appeal to the Duke proving useless (his Excellence simply referred them back to Trotti, in whom his confidence was as unlimited as had been his father's in the man's own father and uncles), the Ariosti were forced to open legal pro-

¹ Letter of July 11, 1516. Zucchetti, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 20.

² Letters xvi. and xvii., Ferrara, July 7, 1519.

ceedings; but with no result. 'The Fattore,' declare Lodovico's brothers and son, after the poet's death, 'because of the hatred that he bore gratuitously to Messer Lodovico, and because of him to all the other brothers, never allowed it to reach an end; but now with one cavillation, now with another, especially alleging the absence of Messer Lodovico Cato, consultor of the Camera, who the greater part of these years was always away, as ambassador, now with the Pope, now with the Emperor, and lastly with the Most Christian King, kept ever and most unjustly deferring the decision, to the great damage of the poor petitioners.'¹

Lodovico's early biographers tell us that the matter embittered his whole life, took away his heart, and robbed him of his energy for composing. He was at this time making additions to his *Orlando*, with a view to a new edition; his answer to Mario Equicola, who had offered him his aid in the lawsuit, is noteworthy among his extant letters.

'My most esteemed Messer Mario,—I thank your Lordship much for the offer you make me to lend me your aid, if I should need it, in my lawsuit; which I gratefully accept, and think to use it; but writing would not suffice me for what I should ask. I think of coming some day to Mantua and informing you fully of what I want; but it is not yet time. As to the Ode for which you ask me, I will search for it among my badly arranged compositions, and will polish it up a little as best I can, and will send it to you. It is true that I am making some little addition to my *Orlando Furioso*; that is, I have begun it; but latterly on one side the Duke, on the other the Cardinal (the one having taken from me a possession that for more than thirty years belonged to our House, the other another possession worth nearly ten thousand ducats, *de*

¹ Petition to Duke Ercole II., dated December 23, 1534 (Cappelli, Document 17). Ariosto's early biographers hint at some private quarrel between the poet and the factor general. Two bitterly satirical sonnets against Trotti were first published as Ariosto's by Barotti; their authenticity is doubtful, but chronological considerations show that they cannot possibly be by Antonio Cammelli da Pistoia, as has been suggested. Alfonso Trotti died in January, 1533, leaving all his possessions and vast wealth to the Duke, with the dying counsel never to give to another single man the power he had given to him. His character is defended by Agostino Mosti (p. 173), but painted in dark colours by Tommasino de' Bianchi (iv. pp. 173, 174, 177), who states that on his death-bed he revealed the knowledge of a conspiracy against his sovereign (*Ibid.*, pp. 187, 188).

facto and without even summoning me to show my reasons), have given me other things to think of than fables. Still, notwithstanding this, I am going on, often doing some little thing. If I continue, I shall not forget to pay my debt of gratitude; and as much better than I have done in the past, as this debt from that time until now has increased infinitely. Messer Mario, be assured that I am yours, first because of natural inclination, now of long standing, and then because of your kindnesses towards me. I commend myself to you, and pray you sometimes to be good enough to remind the Lady Marchesana that I am her most devoted servant. Vouchsafe also to remember me to the magnificent Calandra. Ferrara, October 15, 1519. Yours, Lodovico Ariosto.¹

The Pope himself intervened on behalf of Lodovico and Galasso, both by word of mouth through one of the Ferrarese agents in Rome, Alfonso Paolucci, and by a strongly worded brief addressed to the Duke himself. Galasso's patron, Cardinal Cibo, urged their cause with such warmth that Paolucci was astonished.² But it was all to no purpose. The proceedings dragged on for years, and were still in progress at the death of the poet. Ultimately the Ariosti gave way.

The first edition of the *Orlando Furioso* had by now been completely sold out. A letter of the next year from the poet to Mario Equicola is worth quoting in full, because of the curious light it throws upon the conditions of literary life at the epoch when the author was practically his own bookseller and publisher.

'Magnificent Messer Mario, my most honoured,—Through Messer Giangiacomo Baretone I have had six lire of your money, which your Magnificence has remitted to me, I believe, on account of the moneys due from the seller of my *Orlandi* at Verona. For this I thank you, but they seem to me few compared to what I expected; and I cannot think that that bookseller has not disposed of them all, because I know of no other place in Italy where there are any more of them still to sell; and, if up to now he has not sold them, I do not think that he

¹ Letter xviii.

² Paolucci's letter to the Duke and Leo's brief of February 5, 1520, in Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-59. Paolucci acted temporarily as ambassador in Rome after the death of Beltrando Costabili in June, 1519.

will sell any more. For this reason it would be better for the bookseller to send them back here, because I should at once find means to dispose of them, since I am asked for copies every day. If your Magnificence is restored to health, as I hope you are, I beg you to endeavour to find out how the thing stands; for you will find that the books have been sold, and that that bookseller wants to avail himself of those moneys. Remember that I am yours, and always I commend me to you. Ferrara, November 8, 1520. Yours, Lodovico Ariosto.¹

Leo x. had still shown no signs of fulfilling his pledges to the King of France and Duke Alfonso concerning the restitution of Modena and Reggio. Nor had he laid aside his cherished plans for the conquest of Ferrara itself. The deaths of Giuliano and Lorenzo had merely served to turn his fickle and ambitious thoughts into another channel; he would now emulate Julius II., he would liberate Italy from the barbarian, and recover Parma, Piacenza, and Ferrara, not for his own kindred, but for the Holy Roman Church. This done, he would establish universal peace amongst Christians and organise a new Crusade.

On June 28 of the previous year, 1519, in spite of Leo's intrigues to secure the crown for a less formidable man, had come the fateful election of the still youthful sovereign of the Netherlands, Spain, and Austria, to the imperial throne as the Emperor Charles v.

The Pope's first impulse was to throw himself into the arms of Charles's rival, the Most Christian King. Both sovereigns sincerely desired his alliance. In the autumn of 1519, Leo was negotiating an alliance with France, insisting that a clause should be inserted pledging both the high contracting parties, 'without any delay, exception, or excuse,' to punish rebellious vassals or disobedient subjects of the other, of whatever grade or rank, if called upon to do so. To the French ambassador's protest that this evidently meant the Duke of Ferrara, who was named as an ally of France in the treaty of London, the Pope answered that he bore the Duke no illwill, but that, unless this clause were inserted, he would not pledge himself to refuse the investiture of the Kingdom of

¹ Letter xx.

Naples to the Emperor. On September 16, Giulio de' Medici wrote from Florence to Cardinal Bibbiena in France: 'If any impediment to the conclusion of the treaty be offered there, your most reverend Lordship can repeat, as though on your own account, that, if the Pope had imagined that the Most Christian King would make more account of a Duke of Ferrara or the like than of his Holiness, you do not believe that he would ever have entered into this obligation.'¹ On October 22, the King subscribed the alliance with the Pope at Amboise, but probably had no intention of aiding him in the conquest of Ferrara.

Towards the end of 1519, Duke Alfonso fell seriously ill. Ippolito was absent in Hungary. The Pope despatched a military force under Alessandro Fregoso, the Bishop of Ventimiglia (under the pretence of wishing to return by force of arms to Genoa from which he had been exiled), across the Apennines into the Mirandolese, where he joined the agents of Alberto Pio who had prepared boats for the passage of the Po—the idea being, without declaration of war, suddenly to assail Ferrara. The Marquis of Mantua, however, discovered what was on foot and instantly warned Alfonso, who at first could not believe that the expedition was directed against himself. Nevertheless, he had preparations made for defence, and, without showing any signs of suspecting that the Pope was involved, wrote to inform his Holiness of the plot and to request him to instruct the papal governors of the neighbouring cities to furnish him with aid, should need arise. This Leo promptly did, and for a while Alfonso took no further notice of the affair.² The Pope was more fortunate in Perugia and Fermo, both of which he captured in the spring; Lodovico Uffreducci was killed while defending the latter place against Giovanni de' Medici, while Giampaolo Baglioni, sent prisoner to Rome, was executed in the dungeons of the Castello Sant' Angelo.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1520, the Pope was still oscillating between France and the Empire, treating with both Francis and Charles, each of whom sought to make

¹ Postscript to letter of September 16, 1519, in *Lettere di Principi*, i. p. 14. Cf. Nitti, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-259.

² Cf. Guicciardini, xiii. 5; Pistofilo, cap. xlvii; Cappelli, Document 14; Nitti, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-270; Frizzi, iv. pp. 283, 284.

himself master of Italy by his means. Cardinal Bibbiena, who returned to Rome at the beginning of the year, and Alberto Pio, who was living in the Vatican and unofficially working for the Most Christian King, urged him to keep firm to the French alliance, the latter still hoping and striving to convince the Pope that Francis could be induced to abandon the protection of Ferrara; while the subtle diplomacy of Manuel, the new imperial and Spanish ambassador, drew him to the side of the Empire. Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, 'the whole heart of the Pope,' as Manuel called him, wavered as much as did his Holiness himself, who was, however, growing exasperated at the way in which his authority was being discounted in the places in Italy subject to France, and daily becoming convinced that the Most Christian King did not mean to desert Ferrara.

Hearing of the Duke's illness and of the tempest gathering against his House, the Cardinal Ippolito hurried back to Italy. The one redeeming feature in this bad man's life and character is his real devotion to his brother. On his arrival at Ferrara, he instantly despatched Sigismondo Cantelmi to lay the whole situation before the King of France and to implore his protection for the House of Este. 'Sire,' he wrote, 'because of the news received in Hungary of the grave infirmity of the Duke my brother, I have returned to Ferrara as quickly as possible, not without some danger on the way by reason of the great disorder in which those countries of Hungary and Germany now are; for, because of their bad government, they are full of so great discord and confusion that every one can almost do as he pleases, nor is there any one to correct them. Sire, on my arrival here I have found much being said against the Duke my brother; I hope in God and in you, Sire, that you will not suffer so great a wrong to be done to your most faithful and obedient servants who have never failed you and never will fail you as long as they live; and, albeit we are among the least, I supplicate you, Sire, that you be graciously pleased to look at our fidelity and not at our powers, and, such as God has made us, not to disdain to hold us for yours.'¹

¹ Letter from Ippolito d'Este to Francis I., April 11, 1520. Molini, Document 39. Cf. Sanudo, xxviii. coll. 370, 371, 380.

But Cardinal Bibbiena wrote to the King's mother, Louise of Savoy, in the name of the Pope, that nothing sinister or unfriendly was intended against the Duke of Ferrara. 'The report that has reached France of the enterprise against the Duke of Ferrara is utterly false and alien from the truth, as I assure you by the present letter by order of the Pope, whose mind and will are nothing if not good towards the said Duke. But as to the restitution of Modena and Reggio, it is not to be thought of for the present; but time and occasions often put things right, and the Pope is supremely good and desirous of satisfying the King and you. It is possible that the time will come for the Duke to be consoled in this matter.'¹

On September 2, Ippolito died in the Castel Novo of Ferrara, it is said, of eating too many roasted lobsters. He was buried in the sacristy of the Duomo. In later times a memorial tablet was erected to his memory (by Duke Rinaldo I. of Modena) near the altar beneath which the body of his father's mystical guide and prophetess, Lucia da Narni, is still venerated. By a strange flight of poetical imagination, Ariosto has represented him as offering up his life to the gods for his brother's recovery from sickness.² He left all his possessions to Don Alfonso; but the Papal Curia declared that the latter had falsified the will, and conferred none of his benefices upon members of the House of Este, save the Pieve of Bondeno which was given to Alfonso's second son, the younger Ippolito.³ The abbey of Pomposa was given to the Cardinal Orsini, and Cardinal Giovanni Salviati, a nephew of the Pope, was nominated Bishop of Ferrara.

Two months later, on November 9, Bernardo da Bibbiena followed Ippolito to the grave. He had been one of the few friends of the Estensi at the Papal Court, and the Pope's hands were now free. A few days before, Staffileo, one of the papal agents in France, had written from Blois to Giulio de' Medici that, in answer to questions from the King and Bonnivet as

¹ Letter from Cardinal Bibbiena to Louise of Savoy, May 19, 1520. Molini, Document 38.

² *Carm.* ii. 1. Cf. Mosti, p. 169.

³ Pistofilo, cap. xlix; Cappelli, Document 14. Ippolito had previously (1519) renounced the archbishopric of Milan to his little nephew, Ippolito II., then ten years old, reserving, however, the income to himself during his lifetime. Frizzi, iv. p. 282.

to what the Pope wanted in Italy: 'I said (as from myself) that, so far as I could judge, our Lord would wish to have Ferrara with the aid and favour of France, and that it seemed to me that it could easily be managed now, because of the death of the Cardinal of Ferrara and the indisposition of the Duke, to which, perhaps, the discontent of the Ferrarese themselves at the present state of things would concur. To this the Admiral answered that in his opinion the Pope, the Most Christian King, and England with their united powers could not succeed in such an undertaking, because its fortresses are impregnable. I perceived that they were not at present prepared to agree to our Lord becoming master of Ferrara, which I think does not proceed from any love they bear the Duke, but only through fear of having the States of Holy Church for neighbour.'¹ But by this time the Pope's final decision had been made against France; he was only temporising with the King until the offensive alliance with the Emperor against him should be concluded.

His Holiness appears to have once more had recourse to treachery to effectuate his designs upon Ferrara. Shortly after the return of Ippolito, early, that is, in 1520, the apostolic protonotary Uberto da Gambara (the brother of the poetess, Veronica Gambara) attempted to corrupt a certain Rudolph, the captain of the Swiss or German halberdiers who formed the Duke's bodyguard, with a view of seizing Alfonso and Ippolito together at Belriguardo or Belvedere, or some other one of the Ferrarese pleasure-palaces outside the city, where the Duke often went attended by Rudolph and the halberdiers, and handing them over to a papal force which was secretly to come from Bologna for the purpose. Simultaneously Guido Rangone and Guicciardini were to send troops to surprise the Porta di Castello Tedaldo, which Rudolph was to betray to them, and hold it until the arrival of the papal army which was to be in readiness. According to the process drawn up afterwards by one of the ducal secretaries, Obizzo Remo, the Pope himself spoke to John of Malines, a follower and pupil of Rudolph, on the subject in January, 1521, and made the most tempting promises to him and Rudolph, if they would

¹ Letter of October 29, 1520. Nitti, *op. cit.*, p. 344 n.

give the Duke into his hands, saying that now was the time to do it, as the Cardinal was dead, and the Marquis of Mantua was on the side of the Church, and the Duke was without friends and broken down in health. The plotting went on until the beginning of June.

Rudolph, however, who had from the beginning kept the Duke fully informed of the machinations, and had, by the latter's advice, drawn some two thousand ducats from the protonotary, under pretext of being ready to carry out the treacherous plan, now declared that he could not think of undertaking anything of the kind, and pleasantly requested his Reverence, if he wanted to be of assistance to him, to find some other way of doing it.¹ Alfonso had an exaggerated version of the affair drawn up and despatched to the Emperor and the other princes of Christendom, declaring that the Pope had plotted against his life as well as his State, and pleading this, and his debt of gratitude towards the Most Christian King, as his justification for taking arms on behalf of the French although a feudatary of the Church. 'Seeing,' he wrote, 'that he who ought to be an example of virtue and sanctity to all the world, because of the adorable place that he holds, has fallen into so horrible a thought, and not knowing any more how to defend myself from so many snares, I have been compelled to let my long and humble patience, so many times provoked with so many offences, be at length converted into desperation.'²

A consideration of far greater importance than the subjugation of Ferrara had weighed with the Pope in finally adhering to the Empire against France, in spite of advice from Henry of England and Cardinal Wolsey to keep neutral. Martin Luther had publicly burned the papal bull at Witten-

¹ Guicciardini, xiii. 5; Pistofilo, cap. xlvi. ; Cappelli, Document 12 (*Processo contro Monsignor Uberto da Gambarà*). Cappelli urges that the exaggeration of the process is obvious. Guicciardini's letters to Giulio de' Medici (*Opere Inedite*, vol. vii., Letters cxvi. to cxxix.) prove the reality of the conspiracy, and that the latter was deeply implicated; but it is clear that the statement of Ferrarese historians that Leo contemplated the murder of the Duke cannot be seriously sustained. Guicciardini (*loc. cit.*, Letter cxiii.) accuses Alfonso and Ippolito of having plotted to have him assassinated in the previous year.

² Cappelli, Document 13, and, more fully, in Rodi, *Annali*, MS. cit., ff. 115-119.

berg; the religious revolution in Germany had begun; and Leo needed the support and aid of the Emperor. In April, 1521, came Charles's dramatic condemnation of Luther at the Diet of Worms, and the same evening Raffaello de' Medici left for Rome with the treaty of alliance. After more delay on Leo's part, the perpetual league between Pope and Emperor was signed at the end of May, for the conservation of peace and justice, the reformation of Christendom, and the humbling of the Turk. The French were to be expelled from Italy; Milan was to be restored to the Sforza in the person of Francesco Maria (the deposed Massimiliano's younger brother), and Genoa to the Adorni, as fiefs of the Empire; the Pope was to have Parma and Piacenza, and to be helped to recover Ferrara. The States of the Church and the Medici were to be protected. Swiss mercenaries were to be hired at the joint expense of Pope and Emperor, and the war to begin instantly by assailing Milan and Genoa.

Up to the last moment, Leo continued his duplicity. He had already, in the early spring, obtained a free passage for his Swiss mercenaries from the King of France through Lombardy, and from the Duke of Ferrara through the Ferrarese to Ravenna, by assuring both potentates that he had no hostile intentions. Even after the treaty had been signed, he meditated the overthrow of his imperial ally as soon as it should serve his turn. He flattered himself that, after the French had been expelled from Milan and Genoa, it would be easy for him then to expel the Emperor from the Neapolitan Kingdom with their aid, and thereby win for himself the glory of having delivered Italy.¹

The Marquis of Mantua, having been appointed Captain-General of the armies of the Church, sent back his collar and insignia of the order of St. Michael to the Most Christian King; while the Marquis of Pescara, commander-in-chief of the imperial army, marched up from Naples, with the skilful Spanish general, Antonio de Leyva. With them was Prospero Colonna, who, by the will of Pope and Emperor, held an undefined chief control of the campaign, and Guicciardini himself, as general commissary of the papal army; the Swiss and

¹ Guicciardini, xiv. 1. Cf. Villari, *Machiavelli*, iii. pp. 26-28.

German infantry in the papal pay hurried down from Trent. Against them was the French army under the incompetent command of Odet de Foix, Seigneur of Lautrec, whose troops included a strong contingent of Swiss and a Venetian force; the ex-Duke of Urbino, 'with the usual hopes of exiles,' says Guicciardini, accompanied the French.

The first step of the imperial and papal army was to attack Parma, to the relief of which Lautrec advanced, somewhat tardily, as he was awaiting the arrival of more Swiss. Duke Alfonso, suddenly leaving Ferrara with a hundred men-at-arms, two hundred light horse, two thousand infantry (partly his own, partly Corsicans and other mercenaries sent him by Lautrec), and a full train of artillery, captured Finale and San Felice, which the Pope had given to Alberto Pio, and, simultaneously with Lautrec on the other side, advanced towards Parma, interrupting the enemy's communications, threatening Modena and Reggio. Upon this, in spite of Guicciardini's protests on behalf of the Pope, Pescara and Colonna abandoned the assault on Parma, and retired into the Mantuan territory.

The success of the French was but brief, and Alfonso felt the first brunt of the enemy's wrath. A Florentine-papal force occupied the Garfagnana; Guicciardini from Modena took the Frignano; while other papal captains captured Cento and Pieve, Lugo and Bagnacavallo. Bishop Antonio Pucci of Pistoia and Niccolò Vitelli, with a large force composed chiefly of Swiss, routed Alfonso himself near Finale, on October 10, took and sacked Bondeno, and drove his troops back to the Po. Alfonso was solemnly excommunicated and the bull published at Bologna. In the meanwhile, more Swiss poured down into Lombardy to swell the papal and imperial ranks; the Cardinal of Sion and Giulio de' Medici rode among them with the silver crosses of the Crusade; while, on the other hand, the Swiss in the French army, finding Lautrec totally unprovided with money to pay them, suddenly and completely deserted him.

The game was now lost. The imperial and papal generals crossed the Adda, driving Lautrec back upon Milan, which they entered, practically unopposed, on the afternoon of November 19, simultaneously with his flight from it—the

Castello alone holding out. Piacenza and Parma spontaneously surrendered; Como was taken and sacked by the Spaniards. It seemed that the army of the League would inevitably be turned next upon Ferrara itself. Alfonso sent to hire fresh German mercenaries, and prepared to hold Ferrara till the last.

From this, as it seemed, imminent destruction, the Duke was delivered by the sudden death of Pope Leo x., on December 1, 1521. He passed away without receiving the Sacraments, and, it is said, no one save Fra Mariano, the jester, commended his departing soul. 'He died,' writes Guicciardini, 'if you consider the opinion of men, in the greatest felicity and glory, being delivered by the victory of Milan from inestimable dangers and expenses, for which, being utterly exhausted of money, he was forced to make provision by any means; but especially because, a few days before his death, he had heard of the conquest of Piacenza, and, the very day he died, heard that of Parma—a thing so desired by him that it is certain that, when he decided to undertake the war against the French, he told the Cardinal de' Medici, who was dissuading him from it, that he was moved chiefly by the desire of recovering those two cities for the Church, and that, if he obtained this grace, death would not be bitter to him. A prince in whom there were many things worthy of praise and of blame; and who greatly deceived the expectation that men had of him, when he was assumed to the pontificate; for he acquitted himself with greater prudence, but with much less goodness, than had been ascribed to him by all.'

Duke Alfonso was so delighted that he gave fifty gold scudi to the messenger who brought the tidings of the Pope's death, and had a series of medals struck with various reverses commemorating his deliverance, especially one with a shepherd taking a lamb from the mouth of a lion, with the inscription, *de ore leonis*. But Ariosto's treatment of the Medicean Pontiff is an eloquent testimony to his own more generous nature. Disappointed in his personal hopes of preferment, outraged in his sentiments as a patriotic Ferrarese, he yet remembered that the dead Pontiff had professed himself his friend; a few not unduly severe thrusts he allowed himself in the *Satires*;

but in the *Orlando*—even in the last edition which he had ample opportunity for revising—the unworthy Vicar of Christ, the fickle friend and treacherous statesman, is still idealised as the splendid, liberal, and magnificent Pope of the Renaissance.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE GARFAGNANA

THE news of the death of Pope Leo was the signal for the dispossessed potentates of Italy to take back what they had lost. Alfonso easily retook Lugo, Bagnacavallo, and his other towns in Romagna, reoccupied Bondeno and Finale and the mountain district of the Modenese, and laid siege to Cento. Aided by Ferrarese artillery, Francesco Maria della Rovere recovered the duchy of Urbino, and replaced Malatesta and Orazio Baglioni, the sons of the redoubtable Giampaolo, in Perugia. But Guicciardini valiantly and successfully held Parma for the Church against the French, while some two thousand Switzers under Antonio Pucci were despatched from Piacenza to Modena, to defend that city and Reggio against the Duke of Ferrara. On their approach, Alfonso retreated from Cento; but such was the alarm in Modena that, on Christmas Eve, Guido Rangone forbade the religious to open their churches for the midnight Masses, and ordered that none but soldiers should go about the city, and that neither the hours nor other bells should be rung, lest signals should be given to the supposed conspirators.¹

At the beginning of January, 1522, came the unexpected and extraordinary election of the Emperor's old tutor, Adrian of Utrecht, to the Papacy, who retained his own name as Adrian VI. 'The Cardinals,' writes Guicciardini, somewhat profanely, 'not being able to excuse themselves for this extravagance with any reason, transferred the cause to the Holy Spirit, who was wont, they said, to inspire the hearts of the Cardinals in the election of Pontiffs; as if the Holy Spirit, who especially loves the purest hearts and minds, would not

¹ Tom. de' Bianchi, i. p. 210.

disdain to enter into souls full of ambition and of incredible cupidity, and almost all subjected to very delicate, not to say most dishonest, pleasures.’¹ This worthy man, last of the foreign Popes, had never seen Italy, and was in Spain at the time of his election—in which he at first positively declined to believe. A curious proof of the unexpectedness of his elevation is seen in Alfonso’s communication of the news to Giovanni Fino, his ambassador with Lautrec. He has just heard from Rome that the ‘Cardinal Artumensis’ (of Tortosa) has been elected Pope: ‘having then tried to find out who this Cardinal Artumensis is, we understand that he is a Fleming, a man of the age of sixty-five or thereabouts, and of the parliament and formerly the tutor of the Emperor.’² He at once sent Lodovico Cato as envoy to the new Pontiff, who received him graciously and gave excellent hopes of a complete reconciliation with the Holy See.

The next three years are the most troubled and active, and at the same time the most fully documented, in the story of Ariosto’s life. The Court poet appears in a totally new light, struggling against insurmountable difficulties of a kind to which he was totally unaccustomed, failing nobly, almost heroically, in an impossible undertaking.

The mountainous districts of the Reggiano and Modenese—bandit-infested, faction-ruled—had been among the first to throw off the dominion of the Church and to return to the nominal obedience of the House of Este. The Garfagnana—that most picturesque of Apennine provinces, suspended, as it were, in air between Tuscany and Modena—had been entirely subjected to Lucca under Castruccio degli Anterminelli; but in the fifteenth century the greater part of it had voluntarily yielded itself to the Marquesses of Ferrara, Niccolò, Leonello, and Borso. During its temporary occupation by the Florentine forces of the Cardinal de’ Medici, one little fortress—the Rocca of Le Verrucole—had been held manfully for the Estensi by a handful of outlaws under one Michele dalle Verrucole, who had thereby won their pardon and a substantial reward in money from the Duke. On the news of Pope Leo’s

¹ xiv. 5.

² Molini, Document 75. Cf. Pistofilo, cap. lii.

death, the people of Castelnovo—the capital of the Estensian portion of the province—had risen under the leadership of a local physician, Giovanni Pietro Attolini, on December 7, captured the Rocca or citadel, and expelled the papal commissary, Bernardino Ruffo, with his garrison, tearing to pieces the banner of the Church which had floated over the tower.¹ In memory of the event, solemn processions and offerings were vowed to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception whose vigil it was, and a stone was set up over the gate bearing an Eagle of Este holding in its claws the discomfited Lion of Florence.

Ariosto was at this conjuncture in great financial difficulties. In consequence of the overwhelming expenses of the war, the Duke had at first left off paying his salary regularly, and at last intimated to him that he would be obliged to discontinue it completely. Simultaneously, the income which he had received from the chancellery of the archbishopric of Milan had come to an end, 'since there the laws were silenced by the clash of arms'; and we have already seen that the loss or compulsory renunciation of his two benefices that had been given him by the late Cardinal, together with the devolution of the heritage of his cousin Rinaldo to the ducal Camera, had left him almost without other means.² His frank warning to the Duke that, if he did not relieve his necessities, he must not take it ill if he was compelled to seek service elsewhere, coincided with the revolution of the Garfagnini and their repeated solicitations to his Excellence to send them a governor. On February 7, 1522, Alfonso appointed Lodovico Ariosto to the office of ducal commissary in Garfagnana.

'Fu di me fatta una improvvisa eletta,
O forse perchè il termine era breve
Di consigliar chi pel miglior si metta,
O pur fu appresso il mio Signor più leve
Il bisogno de' subditi che il mio,

¹ Cf. Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-71; Tom. de'Bianchi, i. p. 210.

² *Sat.* iv. 172-183. Cf. Agostino Mosti (p. 172): 'This most excellent and serene House has always payed all its great household regularly; and in my lifetime I remember only once at the end of Leo x. that, because of the very urgent wars, it suspended the salaries for some months, and, for twelve months of the year, only payed ten.'

Di ch'obbligo gli ho quanto se gli deve.
 Obligo gli ho del buon voler, più ch'io
 Mi contenti del dono, il quale è grande,
 Ma non molto conforme al mio desio.¹

The gift was indeed great, inasmuch as it amounted to about 930 *lire marchesane* annually, which was more than three times the salary that Ariosto had received in the Court of the Duke. But it cost his Excellence nothing, as the stipend of the ducal commissary was paid by the four vicariates into which the Garfagnana was divided.² Apart from his desire to benefit the poet without any expense to himself, the Duke was probably moved to this choice from the consideration that, Castelnovo being a place where it was of the highest importance that his commissary should keep on good terms with the Florentines, Ariosto was more in touch with Florence and had more bonds of friendship with its leading citizens than had probably any other gentleman of his duchy.

As to Ariosto, he was not posing when he declared the post *non molto conforme al suo desio*. To a man with his ill health, it involved a life of comparative hardship; to the courtier, it was banishment from his favourite society; to the poet, enforced alienation for a while from the Muses, in a place notoriously turbulent and primitive. The difficulties before him were immense, and the danger considerable. And, above all, it meant absence from the woman whom he loved with the enthusiasm of a youth. There were, however, no alternatives save grinding poverty or beginning life anew—still absent from her—among comparative strangers in an alien Court.

Ariosto prepared for taking up his new duties by making his will, which is dated February 12, 1522, in the choir of the church of S. Maria in Vado in presence of the chaplain,

¹ 'An unexpected choice was made of me, either because the time was short to take counsel who should for better be appointed,

'Or because the need of his subjects weighed less with my master than mine, for which I am as grateful to him as is his due.

'More grateful to him am I for his good will, than contented with the gift, which is great, but not very conformable to my desire' (*Sat.* iv. 193-201).

² Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 84, 85. But this figure which, according to Campori, corresponded to about 2,300 *lire italiane*, does not represent the whole of the commissary's profits—he received something from the fines, condemnations, etc.

Fra Raffaello di Francesco da Murano, and others. In it he is described as 'the worshipful and generous man, the Lord Lodovico of the Ariosti, son of the late Lord Niccolò, a noble of Ferrara, of the contrada of S. Maria delle Bocche, at present commissary-elect of Garfagnana and deputed by our most illustrious Lord, the Lord Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio.' First—I quote this because it is somewhat rare to find Ariosto giving utterance to any definite expression of a religious belief—'the said Lord Testator now and ever piously and devoutly commended his soul to our Most High Creator and Redeemer, praying His clemency that He may deign in His ineffable mercy to assign it to a place of salvation and quiet, and in the company of the other blessed souls.' If he should die in Ferrara, his body is to be buried in the sepulchre of his family in San Francesco. He leaves ten *lire marchesane* to the poor, *pro male ablati incertis*, and everything else to his legitimated son Virginio, with a strongly expressed desire that his legitimation should be confirmed, or that he should be legitimated again by whoever should have the power of jurisdiction to do it, in order that he might be capable of succeeding in his heritage. In the event of Virginio's death before coming of age or intestate, the testator's four brothers—Gabriele, Carlo, the reverend Galasso, and Alessandro—are to inherit in equal portions.¹ The next day, the second edition of the *Orlando Furioso* was published.

His affairs thus settled, Ariosto, accompanied by Virginio and a small escort of mounted *balestrieri* or crossbowmen, set out from Ferrara with a heavy heart, and, by the rough and difficult road that leads through the Modenese Alps, arrived, on February 20, 1522, at Castelnovo :—

‘dove da diversi fonti
Con eterno rumor confondon l'acque
La Turrta col Serchio fra duo ponti.’²

Castelnovo di Garfagnana to-day is a quiet little town in the Apennines, some three hours' drive from the Bagni di

¹ Baruffaldi, Document 15. The first legitimation of Virginio by the Roman Curia is dated January 23, 1520. *Ibid.*, Document 13.

² 'where from different sources with everlasting sound the Turrta and the Serchio mingle their waters between two bridges' (*Sat.* iv. 4-6).

Lucca, on the way that leads from Massa Carrara to Modena across the Alpe di San Pellegrino. It lies mainly on the southern bank of the Serchio, at its junction with the Turrita, and now possesses some four thousand inhabitants. The modern traveller can find tolerable accommodation in the Albergo del Globo. The 'two bridges,' sung by Messer Lodovico, still span the two streams—the more important, that of Santa Lucia del Serchio (by which we cross to go up to Castiglione), having been built by Castruccio degli Anterminelli shortly after 1320; but we enter the town from Lucca by a third bridge, the *ponte nuovo*, constructed in the nineteenth century. To the north—best seen from one of the chestnut-clad hills to the south from which the whole little town lies stretched out below us—rise the Modenese Alps, from which to the north-west the Serchio seems to wind down. Eastwards the main road goes down to Lucca. On the other sides, lower hills enclose the valley and hide the higher mountains, whose quaintly shaped peaks—culminating in the Pania—seem at intervals to peep over at the town. Messer Lodovico, with the Italian dislike of mountains, contrasts it unfavourably with the 'pleasant places' of his native Reggio:—

'Dove altro albergo era di questo meno
 Conveniente a i sacri studi, vuoto
 D'ogni iocundità, d'ogni horror pieno ?
 La nuda Pania tra l'aurora e il noto,
 Da l'altre parti il giogo mi circonda,
 Che fa d'un Pellegrin la gloria noto.
 Questa è una fossa ove habito, profonda,
 Donde non muovo piè senza salire
 Del silvoso Apennin la fiera sponda.'¹

There is little left—save the picturesque bridges—to remind us of the days of Ariosto. The famous Rocca has been in part destroyed, in part completely modernised to serve as municipal offices. There are, of course, the inevitable pompously worded memorial tablets, erected by United Italy to the

¹ 'Where were there other quarters less meet for the sacred studies than these, devoid of all pleasantness, full of every horror ?

'Between east and south the bare Pania, on the other sides the ridge surrounds me that makes known the glory of a Pilgrim.

'This is a deep trench in which I dwell, whence I move not a foot without climbing the steep sides of the woody Apennines' (*Sat.* iv. 136-144).

memory of her great romantic poet. Here and there, as we wander through the streets, we come across old houses that may well have been then to catch his eyes; two have remains of curious stone decorations round the windows in the style of the diamond-shaped facets of the Palazzo dei Diamanti at Ferrara.

A portion of the Garfagnana still belonged to Florence, and a Florentine captain resided at Barga, the chief place in the district subject to the great Republic. A third portion was included in the territory of Lucca, with the loftily placed fortress of Castiglione, on the right of the Serchio some six kilometres from Castelnovo, commanding a splendid panorama of mountains.¹ From Castiglione, the Lucchese vicar could almost have watched the movements of the Ferrarese ducal commissary at Castelnovo—which is clearly visible from its battlements.

It was, naturally, especially with the Florentines that the situation was delicate in the extreme, and the first letter preserved to us of Ariosto's commissariat is addressed to his 'magnificent and honoured brother,' the Captain of Barga: 'As my most illustrious Lord, the Duke of Ferrara,' he writes, 'has made choice of me for the government of this his province of Garfagnana, and as I know how much his Excellence is desirous that his subjects should live in peace and be able to deal without suspicion with their neighbours, and especially with the subjects of the lofty Republic of Florence; considering the perfect friendship that always was and is between the said lofty Republic and his Excellence, I have thought it my duty on my arrival to visit your Lordship with this letter, and to pray you that, in the needs that may arise in the government committed to us of these subjects, you would act with me as I with you, so that with every industry, to the

¹ Castiglione still possesses remains of its walls, turrets, and towers, and has a church which was consecrated to St. Peter in the twelfth century. In the fifteenth century, the Lucchese defended it strenuously when the surrounding places surrendered to the Estensi. Tablets in the Municipio record the fidelity of its inhabitants towards the Republic of Lucca and their valour against the Modenese, which another tablet, of the time of Duke Francis IV., shows did not avail them at the last. Castiglione was ceded to Lucca by the Congress of Vienna, but afterwards fell to the Duke of Modena. The whole of the Garfagnana is now included in the modern Tuscan province of Massa Carrara.

best of our power, we may strive to bring them back into that peace, union, and quiet in which our lofty and most illustrious Masters have always been and at present are.’¹

‘I would not be unjust to any person in the world,’ he wrote, a little later, to the Otto di Pratica in Florence, when some misunderstanding had arisen, ‘and least of all to any of your subjects, for—besides that I hold your lofty Lordships in reverence in respect of the good friendship that I know to be between my most illustrious Lord Duke and that lofty Republic—I, too, personally, both through the old familiarity that I have had in Florence and by a natural inclination, am very affectionate towards that State and desirous of obeying its commands.’²

With the authorities of Lucca, the poet-commissary’s relations were more cordial and confidential. He could frequently go up to Castiglione to concert measures with the Lucchese vicar, and arranged with the governors of the Republic that they should mutually keep each other informed of the news of Tuscany and Lombardy. ‘My most illustrious Lord writes to me,’ we find him saying to the Anziani of the Republic of Lucca, ‘that there is going to be trouble in Tuscany, and that I must use all diligence to learn from hour to hour what is the result; and his Excellence specially bids me to have recourse to your Lordships, since he is certain that he will have the whole truth from you; and so with this letter of mine I pray your Lordships to be good enough to communicate to me all that happens, in order that I may fulfil the intention of my most illustrious Lord. I will fully bear all the expense of the messengers which you will send with the news, according to what your Lordships shall advise me; and also I am content to share, to what extent your Lordships shall think just, in the expense which you shall incur in sending to the places necessary to have the truth; for such is also the wish of my most illustrious Master.’³

At the end of August, 1522, Pope Adrian entered Rome, received with scarcely veiled contempt as *un pontefice di*

¹ Letter xxi., March 2, 1522.

² Letter xxxiv., September 24, 1522.

³ Letter xxvi., April 25, 1522.

nazione barbara. Alfonso at once sent his eldest son, Don Ercole, under the charge of Enea Pio and Matteo Casella, with a noble train of the chief gentlemen of the Ferrarese duchy, to pay his homage to his Holiness. In order that the boy might not waste his time, his tutor accompanied him, to give him lessons every morning and instruct him on the significance of the antiquities of Rome. 'The prince of Ferrara,' writes Agostino Mosti, who was probably in his train, 'was then fourteen and a half years old, when he made his entry into Rome in great state, and for such a boy hugely admired and praised as he rode in on a great roan horse of Mantuan stock, right beauteous and wise and excellent in its paces.'¹ In public consistory, in the presence of the Pope and Cardinals, the beautiful young son of Lucrezia Borgia pleaded for the restitution of Modena and Reggio to his father in an eloquent Latin discourse. The Cardinals were profuse in their congratulations; the Pope embraced him and renewed all the promises he had made to Lodovico Cato, but shook his head over the chief request: if the Duke had taken them back during the vacancy of the Papacy, he said, he could have confirmed their possession to him; but he could not now despoil the Church of what she possessed.² But he appears to have given some sort of promise, so that 'this dove returned to his father bearing the branch of a pacific olive, which soon after dried up through the procured death of the most holy Pope, who had tried to correct and reform the corrupt morals of that city.'³ 'I thank your Magnificence,' writes Ariosto to the ducal secretary, Obizzo Remo, 'for the tidings you have given me of the Lord Don Ercole, and so I shall live in hopes of better, and that what was promised to Messer Lodovico Cato in Spain will be what we all desire.'⁴

In the meanwhile, Modena and Reggio were governed for the Church by Guido Rangone and Leonello Pio respectively. Their rule was incompetent and oppressive, the state of Reggio, perpetually harassed by French and Spanish soldiers, being

¹ *La Vita Ferrarese*, pp. 175, 176.

² So Panciroli, *Storia di Reggio*, ii. p. 182; but cf. Guicciardini, xv. 1.

³ Faustini, p. 5.

⁴ Letter xxxvi., October 2, 1522.

particularly deplorable. Fresh disorders broke out, and in November, 1522, the Pope reappointed Guicciardini as governor of both cities. On his entry into Modena, on November 14, 'there was made an extraordinary jubilation of bells, trumpets and artillery, and folk going to meet him; at the creation of the Holiness of Pope Adrian no rejoicing of any kind was made—hardly were his arms put up through the city—and for this man they have made such a great show of joy that it would have sufficed if he were a sceptred sovereign.'¹

Guicciardini and Ariosto, two of the three keenest intellects of Italy, were thus performing similarly uncongenial offices of government for rival masters, within comparatively few miles of each other, each endeavouring to uphold the banner of impartial justice under impossible conditions; while the third, Machiavelli, probably a stronger and more far-sighted spirit than either, had gone back, after the dispersal of the brilliant society of the Orti Oricellari that had followed the discovery of the plot of the Florentine republicans against the life of the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici in June, 1522, to his villa in the country. 'This villa,' writes Pasquale Villari, 'situated among the hills that surround Florence, at several hours' distance from her, seemed to shut him in among woods and fields, and separate him from the native city that had been the scene of his activity, of his joys, of his perished hopes, and of his misfortunes. He felt himself there as isolated from the world, and sought peace in solitude and study. Still, when he looked towards the north, between the curves of the fair hills, there appeared again before his eyes the cupola of the Duomo, the Campanile, the tower of the Palace, continually to remind him of the past and never to allow him to forget the present.'² There he was engaged in the composition of his *Florentine Histories*, and his prison was at least a more congenial one than was that of his great Ferrarese contemporary among the mountains of the Garfagnana. One of the five anti-Medicean conspirators, Zanobi Buondelmonti, had been one of Ariosto's best friends in the society of Florence; escaping by way of Lucca, he came to Castelnovo, where Lodovico

¹ Tom. de' Bianchi, i. p. 229.

² *Machiavelli*, iii. p. 39.

received him kindly and sheltered him until he was able to make his way to France.¹

Pope Adrian vi. died on September 14, 1523. Alfonso promptly prepared to take back what he claimed as his own. 'We expect to have a bad winter from soldiers,' writes the Modenese chronicler. There were barely nine hundred papal troops available, under Count Guido Rangone, for the defence of Modena, Reggio, and Rubiera; but the Conservatori of Modena assured Guicciardini that 'all the city was disposed to maintain the state for Holy Church, and would sacrifice their possessions, lives, and their own children to defend her.'² Guicciardini, however, being without artillery and without money to pay them, did not rely much upon these protestations. 'The will of these peoples,' he wrote to the College of Cardinals on September 18, 'would suffice for defence against a foray or a slight assault, but could hardly withstand artillery and an army; and all the more against the Duke of Ferrara, whose name, because of his House having dominated for so many years over these towns, is in such respect that even those who are not his friends will not dare to discover themselves.'³ He brought fifteen hundred Spanish soldiers into Modena, with an imperial officer who professed to act in the name of the Emperor, and prepared for a strenuous resistance. But he had curiously mistaken the temper of the people, as far as Modena itself was concerned.

Alfonso had united with Renzo da Ceri and advanced into Modenese territory. On September 27, he sent his trumpeter Baracchino to demand the surrender, promising pardon to all who had offended him. The Conservatori professed themselves as loyal subjects of the Church now as they had been of the House of Este in the past, and referred him to Guicciardini there present. 'I give you to understand,' then said the herald, 'on behalf of his Excellence, that he will come with his own aid and that of his friends to take this his

¹ Nardi, ii. p. 74. Of the other conspirators, all young men of light and learning, Luigi di Tommaso Alamanni and Jacopo da Diacceto were beheaded; the poet, Luigi di Piero Alamanni, and his friend, Antonio Brucioli, escaped into the territory of the Duke of Urbino. Buondelmonti ultimately joined them in Venice. Cf. Hauvette, *Luigi Alamanni*, pp. 33-39.

² T. de' Bianchi, i. pp. 243, 245.

³ *Opere Inedite*, vol. vii., Letter ccxviii.

city out of the hand of his enemies, in despite of whoso holds it by force. All the soldiers who are within will he put to the sword; and the citizens and inhabitants of Modena, great and small, will he slay, and will give up the city to sack, to fire, and to flame. And he protests that, if he has to take the city by force, he will make it pay with interest all the damage he has suffered in it from the day in which he lost it till the day in which he shall take it, and all that it shall cost him to take it.'

The Conservatori were unmoved; Guicciardini and Count Guido professed themselves ready to defend the city for the Church until the last; and the herald was shown the authority of the commander of the Spanish mercenaries to protest against the Duke's action, in the name of the League of the Church and of the Emperor and of the Duke of Milan. The people supported the magistrates in their protestations of loyalty and fidelity to the Church, declaring that they would rather die in defence of the city than return to paying the heavy bread-tax that they had borne in the days of the Duke. On the following day, at the rumour that the Duke's light cavalry were approaching, people and soldiers sprang to arms. Guicciardini himself appeared on the balcony of the palace, proclaimed a general and universal exemption from the duties levied at the gates and from the tax on wine for three years, and held out hopes that the new Pope, when elected, would grant much more. The people in the piazza roared out their applause, and Guicciardini rode through the streets of the city followed by the whole populace, cheering vigorously for the Church. A practically voluntary loan from the citizens enabled him to pay the Spanish mercenaries.¹ In fact, from the Estensian point of view, Ariosto's gibe at obstinate Modena, more than deserving all she got, was finding a certain justification.²

Foiled at Modena, Duke Alfonso moved to San Maurizio, whence, on September 29, he sent Baracchino with a similar but less violent message to bid Reggio surrender. There was

¹ T. de' Bianchi, i. pp. 246-249; Sandonnini, *op. cit.*, pp. 48, 49, and Document 10.

² *Sat.* v. 29, 30. Tomasino de' Bianchi (i. pp. 469, 470) attributes Alfonso's repulse from Modena to the direct intervention of St. Geminianus.

a strong ducal party in this city; and, after some hesitation, the Anziani at sunset opened the gates to the Duke, recording, however, a protest that they only did so under compulsion. The papal troops retired into the citadel, which, after a short resistance, capitulated on the following day. Guicciardini, writing to the Sacred College, declared that the Reggians had been unable to do anything else save surrender, and that they had been deserted by the papal authorities as though the city were *uno vile castello*. 'Thus,' he wrote, 'what the late Pontiffs have acquired and preserved to the Apostolic See, so gloriously and with such great expense and peril, now begins to be lost by lack of a little provision. God pardon him who is the cause of it.'¹ On October 9, the town and citadel of Rubiera after a short bombardment likewise surrendered to Alfonso. In the meanwhile, the Sacred College had issued a new bull of excommunication against the Duke, which was solemnly posted up on the door of the Duomo in Modena on the same day as the taking of Rubiera.

On November 19, 1523, the very day upon which, two years before, he had entered Milan in triumph as the legate of his cousin Leo x., Giulio de' Medici was elected Pope, and took the title of Clement vii. The profound satisfaction with which his election appears to have been almost universally received was, naturally, not shared by the friends and adherents of the Duke of Ferrara. 'A letter came to me from Lucca,' wrote Ariosto to Alfonso at Rubiera, 'which informed me that Medici was elected Pope. When this news was heard by these people of Castelnovo, they felt as though their heads were all cut off, and they are so terrified thereat that there were some who wished to persuade me to have the town put under guard the same evening; and some think to sell their goods, others to carry them off for safety. I am striving to comfort them, and am telling them that I know that there is close friendship between your Excellence and Medici, and that they need hope for nothing save good. I

¹ Letter dated Modena, September 30, 1523. *Opere Inedite*, vol. vii., Letter cexxi. Alberto Pio, whom both parties now hated cordially, is the person Guicciardini means. The College had committed Rubiera and Reggio to his charge, and he had attempted to keep their fortresses in his own hands, possibly with the design of surrendering them to the French.

have thought well to advise your Excellence of this, so that, if you have anything with which I can reassure them, you may deign to signify it to me, and, if you have not, at least to feign it.'¹

The new Pope told the Modenese envoys that he would give them good cause to rejoice at his election, and that he loved them as much as he did his own city of Florence.² In the meanwhile, he appointed Guicciardini president of Romagna instead of Modena, to which city he sent the Florentine historian, Filippo Nerli, who was brother-in-law of Cardinal Salviati, as governor in the greater historian's place.

In his dreary prison, for such Castelnovo di Garfagnana seemed to the poet, Ariosto was doomed to remain for more than three years—relieved by occasional visits to Ferrara, either avowedly for a brief holiday or in obedience to a ducal summons:—

‘E s’io non fossi d’ogni cinque o sei
Mesi stato uno a passeggiar fra il Domo
E le due statue de’ Marchesi miei ;
Da sì noiosa lontananza domo,
Già sarei morto, o più di quelli macro
Che stan bramando in Purgatorio il pomo.’³

There he could for a brief while breathe again the air of the genial life he loved, associate with his old friends, and experience the ecstatic raptures of more or less furtive intercourse with Alessandra. It was, probably, when returning to Castelnovo after one of these brief visits to Ferrara (and not on the occasion of his first going to the Garfagnana), that the first of the following incidents, recorded by his early biographer, took place.

‘In these districts,’ writes Garofolo, ‘he was not merely loved, but revered even by the highwaymen, well-nigh bestial fellows and bereft of humanity. On the way to his seat of government, he was riding one day with his household, who were some six or seven horsemen, and, having near Rodea

¹ Letter cxv., dated Castelnovo, November 23, 1523.

² T. de’ Bianchi, i. p. 275. Cf. Sandonnini, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

³ ‘And had I not been one out of every five or six months to stroll between the Duomo and the two statues of my Marquesses ;

‘Overcome by so irksome a banishment, I should be already dead, or more lean than those who stand in Purgatory desiring the apple’ (*Sat.* vii. 151-156).

to pass through the midst of a company of armed men who were sitting under some trees, not knowing who they were, he went on, not without some fear, because those mountains at that time were much infested by robbers through the factions of Domenico d'Amorotto and Filippo Pacchioni, deadly enemies to each other. But, when he had passed on a little way, their leader asked the servant, who was behind the others, who the gentleman might be; and, having heard that he was Lodovico Ariosto, he at once, armed as he was with breastplate and bill, started to run after him. Lodovico, seeing him coming, stopped, somewhat doubtful as to what was to ensue. The man, having overtaken him and reverently saluted him, told him that he was Filippo Pacchioni, and craved his pardon for not having spoken to him as he passed, because he knew not who he was, but that, having now learned, he desired to know him by sight, even as long before he had known him by reputation; and at the end, having made him courteous offers of service, he humbly took leave of him. Shortly afterwards, having to confer about certain particulars of his office with one of the chief gentlemen of Lucca, Lodovico went, according to what they had arranged, to San Pellegrino, where he found not only the gentleman but many others of the noblest of the city, who, in company with many ladies, drawn by the fame of his worth, had gathered together to see him and to honour him. And so, bringing him to a courtly dwelling-place, they entertained him at a splendidly prepared banquet, rivalling each other in doing him marked courtesies and in using towards him unwonted demonstrations of love and of reverence.'

These things may be facts or picturesque legends, but it is at least clear that such consolations in the Garfagnana were few and far between. Lodovico's own words give us a sufficiently graphic picture of what his daily life in Castelnovo was like:—

'O stiami in Rocca o voglio a l'aria uscire,
Accuse e liti sempre e gridi ascolto,
Furti, homicidii, odi, vendette et ire;
Sì che hor con chiaro, hor con turbato volto,
Convien che alcuno prieghi, alcun minacci,
Altri condanni, altri ne mandi assolto;

Ch' ogni dì scriva, et empia fogli e spacci
 Al Duca, hor per consiglio hor per aiuto,
 Sì che i ladron, c'ho d'ogni intorno, scacci.
 Dei saper la licentia in che è venuto
 Questo paese, poi che la Pantera,
 Indi il Leon l'ha fra gli artigli havuto.
 Qui vanno gli assassini in sì gran schiera,
 Ch' un' altra, che per prenderli ci è posta,
 Non osa trar del sacco la bandiera.
 Saggio chi dal castel poco si scosta !
 Ben scrivo a chi più tocca, ma non torna
 Secondo ch' io vorrei mai la risposta.
 Ogni terra in sè stessa alza le corna,
 Che sono ottantatre, tutte partite
 Da la sedition che ci soggiorna.
 Vedi hor se Apollo, quando io ce lo invite,
 Vorrà venir, lasciando Delpho e Cintho,
 In queste grotte a sentir sempre lite.¹

The official correspondence of Ariosto, as ducal commissary of the Garfagnana, is the most eloquent and complete commentary on these lines. More than one hundred and fifty of these letters of his have been preserved, dating mostly from Castelnovo, addressed to the Duke himself, to his two secretaries (Bonaventura Pistofilo and Obizzo Remo), to the governments of Florence and Lucca (the Otto di Pratica in the one case, the Anziani in the other), to their various officials and agents on the spot. A certain number of his *gride* or proclamations are likewise extant, forbidding sheltering or aiding men under ban, using weapons in quarrels and tumults, going

¹ 'Whether I stay in the Rocca or go out to take the air, I always hear accusations, quarrels and outcries, thefts, murders, hatred, vengeance and rage;

'So that, now with calm and now with angry mien, needs must I entreat one, threaten another, condemn another, others send away absolved.

'Every day must I write, fill, and despatch sheets to the Duke, now for counsel, now for aid, so that I may hunt out the robbers that I have all round.

'Thou must know the licence into which this country has come, since the Panther and then the Lion has had it in its claws.

'Here go assassins in such a great band that another, that is put here to take them, dares not draw the banner from its sack.

'Wise is he who wanders little from the Castle ! I write, indeed, to him whom most it touches, but never comes back the reply as I should like.

'Every town lifts up the horns in itself, and there are eighty-three of them, all divided by the sedition that keeps ever here.

'See now if Apollo, did I invite him hither, would come, leaving Delphi and Cynthus, ever to hearken to quarrels in these caverns' (*Sat.* iv. 145-168).

armed into Florentine territory, selling bread in other places save where it has been baked, and the like. Every outlaw who shall slay another outlawed for homicide shall be pardoned, or, if he does not happen to be under ban himself, shall gain a pardon for any one he wishes, provided that this latter has not been outlawed for rebellion or murder.¹ In these proclamations, doubtless to impress the rough mountaineers over whom he was thus set to rule, Ariosto uses the title of Count which, although no doubt legally his, he did not take seriously enough ever to adopt in Ferrara. Studying the letters, as the present writer has had the opportunity of doing, on the spot, in long summer mornings under the shade of the chestnut-trees that clothe the hills round about Castelnovo, they have a certain fascination; the grim and strenuous outlaws of the French and Italian factions, the local magnates and functionaries holding office at their will, and more or less openly in league with them, the unfrocked priests, fiercer and more turbulent than the brigands themselves, and the other fantastic figures with whom the poet, backed only by his little handful of crossbowmen, had to deal, rise vividly before us out of the past; but, reviewed in cold blood many miles from the Garfagnana, we are more impressed by the sordidness of the whole story, the baseness and brutality of every one concerned, the utter triviality and unworthiness of the matter with which the imaginative, sensitive, highly-strung poet was being forced to concern himself—a story, indeed, redeemed only by Ariosto's own noble bearing throughout, his frankness and dignity, his never-failing sympathy and kindness for all really in distress or trouble, his impartiality, never-swavering loyalty and genuine thirst for righteousness. 'As long as I am in this office,' he wrote to the Duke, 'I shall not have any friend save justice.'²

But, in the state bordering upon anarchy in which the whole Garfagnana lay, it was impossible to see where justice could still be found. Filippo Pacchioni might personally pay respectful homage to Messer Lodovico on his way to Castelnovo; Domenico d'Amorotto (while making hostile excursions into the Frignano with aid from Leonello and Alberto Pio) might

¹ These *gride* in Cappelli, pp. 309-317.

² Letter cxlviii., July 31, 1524.

protest that he was in reality a good servant of the Duke of Ferrara; the poet knew not which to believe. As to the second of these two faction-leaders, a mighty chief of bandits, 'Your Excellence should know better than I whether he is your good servant or not. For my part I rather question it, because what I have seen him do in the past seems contrary to this. Still, since he has more power in these regions than have the officials of your Excellence, I think that it would be well to affect to believe that he is friend rather than foe, until some day Messer Domenedio shall be pleased to make us stronger than he.'¹ In the meanwhile, when Domenico offered to co-operate with three hundred men with Ariosto in extirpating the bandits of the rival faction, it was necessary to accept his offer. But when, in a savage fight among the mountains, on July 5, 1523, Domenico d'Amorotto was done to death by Antonio Pacchioni and Tebaldo Sessi, Ariosto and Guicciardini were equally relieved at his decease.² And, for the rest, the factions self-styled French and Italian made men's lives a terror and a burden. There were no impartial men, none really loyal on either side, or, if there were, Ariosto had no means of identifying them. The whole province dreaded the outlaws incomparably more than they did the Duke's officials, and the poet soon found that, if he once took to carrying out the law about burning the houses of criminals and those who sheltered them, he would have to lay the entire district waste. 'I want your Excellence to know everything in order that you may think and advise me of how I am to act, for verily, unless some good measures be taken, this province will go from bad to worse; to your Excellence will remain nothing but the bare title of being lord of it, and the lordship will effectually belong to these assassins and to their aiders and abettors that they have in this province, and especially in Castelnovo.'³ And, to the Anziani of the

¹ Letter xlv., November 25, 1522. On November 22, Alfonso had instructed his ambassador at Rome, Lodovico Cato, to complain to the Pope of the aid given by Alberto Pio to Domenico d'Amorotto, who 'is the most sanguinary and cruel assassin alive, and there is no punishment that he does not deserve' (Giovanni Levi, *Il Guicciardini e Domenico d'Amorotto*, Bologna, 1879, Document 44).

² Letters lxxv. and xc., May 2 and July 15, 1523.

³ Letter liii., to the Duke of Ferrara, April 15, 1523.

Republic of Lucca, he wrote: 'Of all these mountains the assassins and men of evil sort are lords, and not the Pope, nor the Florentines, nor my Master, nor your Lordships.'¹

The geographical position added to the difficulties. 'The closeness of these towns to each other,' he writes to one of the Florentine officials, 'though subject to three governments (those of the Florentine Republic, of the Lucchese, and of my own Master), is the chief reason that the outlaws of each of these three States have little fear of the law and can stay securely in the country, because, when they are hunted out of one, they can easily find a shelter near at hand in another.'² Ariosto's attempts to induce the three governments to unite in measures of repression and mutual support were in vain. The government of Lucca was ready to co-operate, but the Florentines gave him only words, and probably were secretly fanning the flames. The Malaspina in the Lunigiana and the Florentine captain of Pietrasanta were prepared to give effect to their hostility towards the House of Este, whenever an opportunity should occur. And, what was still harder for the poet to bear, many of the worst criminals in his jurisdiction had influential friends in Ferrara itself, who intrigued and plotted behind his back, to protect them from the consequences of their outrages and stultify all his efforts to enforce the laws against them. When, with the utmost difficulty, he had secured the person of a peculiarly dangerous fellow known as Il Moro dal Sillico, the man escaped from his prison, made his way to Ferrara, and was allowed to enter unquestioned into the ducal service, with his followers, as soldiers.

Almost more maddening than this was the ecclesiastical question. 'The worst and the most partial men of this district,' wrote Ariosto, 'are the priests.' There were murderers and persecutors of women among them; but the Ferrarese Garfagnana was subject *in spiritualibus* partly to the Bishop of Lucca, partly to the Bishop of Luna, neither of whom would either give the Duke's commissary authority over the priests or himself inflict any adequate punishment upon them. A

¹ Letter lxxxiii., June 20, 1523.

² Letter dated Castelnovo, October 16, 1522, to Niccolò Zardino, commissary of Fivizzano. British Museum, Add. MS. 25,036. Also published by Renier, *Spigolature Ariostesche*.

certain Prete Matteo, 'a homicide and public assassin,' had been with some other scoundrels in hurling a poor man down from a rock, and had wounded Ariosto's chancellor; the poet handed him over to the Bishop of Lucca, who 'with a little water sent him away absolved.' An even more abominable ecclesiastical ruffian, known as Prete Job, had brutally mishandled a girl and her mother; nevertheless, on his father (a local lawyer) declaring that his son was in holy orders and producing bulls from the same bishop or his vicar, he had to be suffered to return to Castelnovo unmolested. 'If it were not that I fear ecclesiastical censures, because I have benefices,' wrote Ariosto to the Duke, 'I should not consider that this fellow was a priest, and should punish him worse than a layman; and, if I could do nothing else, I should at least put him under ban; for, even if temporal rulers have no power over clerics, still it seems to me that not even clerics should be able to stay in the dominion of these rulers against their will. I have wished to write about it to your Excellence, in order that you may make what provision you think fit; but be pleased to commit the carrying out of whatever you decide to the Captain rather than to me, as he has no benefices as I have.'¹ Everywhere, either of their own free will or through fear, the priests gave shelter to outlaws, who took sanctuary and fortified themselves in the *campanili*; and Ariosto assured the Duke that it would be 'a holy work' if he would order the Captain to burn down all the presbyteries and churches in the country.²

But, all through these years, Ariosto's innate gentleness of nature was standing him in bad stead. He loathed stern measures even against men whom he knew to be bad, and was full of intense compassion for the poor. We find him personally forwarding to Obizzo Remo the supplication of some poor men under his government, that they may not be put to the expense of having to go in person to Ferrara to appeal to the Duke, and pleading eloquently with the Anziani of the Republic

¹ Letters xliv., lv., lxv., November 25, 1522, April 17 and May 2, 1523.

² Letter cxxxi., March 8, 1524. Guicciardini, when governor of Modena and Reggio, had also found the question of how to deal with criminal priests a difficult one. Cf. his *Opere Inedite*, vol. vii. p. 187.



LODOVICO ARIOSTO. MEDALS BY PASTORINO DE' PASTORINI
AND DOMENICO POGGINI.

of Lucca on behalf of some still poorer subjects of his master who are in trouble for not having conformed with the Lucchese custom-house regulations concerning a few measures of chestnut-flour which they have bought, and which has been confiscated, and who will be undone and die of hunger if the republican officials will not have mercy on them.¹ 'I have compassion upon him,' he writes to Messer Obizzo, on behalf of a certain Bastiano Coiaio who had pleaded hard with the poet to get him off going to Ferrara; 'still, in this I refer myself to one who has better judgment than I, and in whom mercy does not corrupt justice. I frankly confess it, that I am not a man to govern other men, because I have too much pity, and I cannot bring myself to deny anything that is asked of me.'²

'As the time is drawing near,' he writes to the Duke, 'for this Captain of Justice to finish his office, for this June is his limit, I am afraid of remaining here without a companion, or of there being sent in his stead one who is not so suited to the office as he is; for, as I have written on other occasions and told you by word of mouth, he is virile, and a man to make himself feared and obeyed; and with his severity he tempers that defect of mine which some of Castelnovo have imputed to me, to wit, of being too kind; so that, if another were sent here who was likewise too kind, I fear that the two of us together would make a mixture that would be worth little. Therefore, I pray your Excellence not to let him go away until you have provided us with another like to him; or, at least, let him remain here for all August.'³

Only once, indeed, in all this dreary time, do we find Ariosto less than himself, and this is in a sudden fit of panic in a rare moment of comparative tranquillity. 'By the grace of God,' he writes to the Duke, 'we are living here quite quietly and in peace, and everything would be going well, were it not that we are very near some towns that are infected with the pestilence; but I, with the Captain of Justice and with other

¹ Letters xxxiii. and cxxxii., September 14, 1522, and March 17, 1524.

² Letter xxxvi., October 2, 1522.

³ Letter liv., April 16, 1523. The *Capitano della Ragione* was the official next in degree to the Commissary. Letter cxxiv. shows that Ariosto did not get on so well with his successor.

good men of this town, am not ceasing to take all necessary measures ; but the danger is in our having to deal with countrymen who cannot easily be restrained from going about to do business ; still, God has helped us until now, and I hope will still help us. Nevertheless, if it should happen that any one takes the infection, I beseech your Excellence to be content that I, without further writing, may go away and come home, because in every other place I could get heart to escape the pestilence save here, where I have always rustics at my ears, and there is no one who would stand in greater danger than I.¹ But, for the rest, the situation grew daily more intolerable. The greatest crimes—like the horrible murder of the old Count and Countess of San Donnino, with their son Carlo, by Giovanni Madalena and his followers—passed practically unpunished. The poet could only rely upon his little handful of crossbowmen, and at last he began to doubt the fidelity even of these. ‘I have only ten crossbowmen, and I do not even trust them, because they have been so long in this country that they are not less partial than the Garfagnini themselves, for the greater part have got wives and kindred here.’²

At the beginning of 1524, Ariosto appealed to the Duke to relieve him of his ungrateful office. ‘Let your Excellence remember,’ he wrote, ‘that, on the seventh day of next February, two years will be completed during which I have held this office, which I would gladly change for another in which I should be nearer to you, provided that I could fill it with your good grace ; such would be the commissariat of Romagna ; for, with the little experience that I have, after all, acquired here in Garfagnana, I venture to hope that I should succeed better in that office than I have known how to do in this.’³ The commissariat of Romagna, it will be remembered, was the office that Lodovico’s father had held and in which he had justly incurred the displeasure of Duke Ercole. Alfonso, however, would neither recall the poet, nor give him the material and moral support he needed to enable him to carry out his duties efficaciously.

¹ Letter xlv., November 26, 1522.

² Letter cxlii., July 20, 1524.

³ Letter cxxiv., January 12, 1524.

‘If your Excellence does not help me to defend the honour of my office,’ wrote Ariosto a few days later, in what is, perhaps, the finest of his extant letters, ‘I have not the power to do it for myself; for, although I condemn and threaten those who disobey me, if your Excellence then absolves them or settles the matter in a way that shows you take their side rather than mine, you yourself are helping to cast down the authority of the magistracy. It would be better, if I am not suited to it, to send some one who would be more to the point, than, by always overturning whatever I do, good or bad, to weaken the majesty of the commissariat—as has happened in the recalling of the letter already registered, as also in the absolution of Ser Tomaso and confirming him in his office to the end of his term, and other things that I do not wish to repeat now. If such ignominies were inflicted upon me alone, I should not say a word about it, because your Excellence can treat me as your servant; but, since such slights redound more to dishonour the office I hold, and consequently to make the persons with whom I have to deal more insolent towards their rulers, I do not think fit to endure it without complaining to your Lordship. Recently your Excellence can have heard, because I have written about it to Messer Bonaventura (that is, if that letter has arrived before this), how the men of Le Verrucole have that Genese a prisoner, who murdered Count Giovanni of San Donnino, and I sent immediately a messenger and then the crossbowmen to have him brought here. They refused to give him to me, saying that they had informed Messer Bonaventura of it and that, until they have the reply, they would do nothing else. It seeming to me that this was not to the honour of my office, I answered with letters that they were to bring him here, and to appoint whomsoever they pleased on their behalf to be present at his examinations, for I intended to do nothing save what justice demanded. They have not written anything back to me, but have sent a messenger to me to say by word of mouth that they will not give him me; and they have further told, first the crossbowmen and then the second messenger, that they know that I had taken money from the Madaleni and for this I did not have their houses burnt, and that they fear that, if I have

this Genese in my hands, I shall let him go for money. If, in addition to the outrages that these sons of Prete Simon commit all over the country, as your Excellence must needs know something of it (for I have not failed to keep you informed), and to the continual keeping of bandits under Bernardello in the fortresses, your Excellence wishes also to pass over their not rendering obedience to your Commissary, I beg you to send some one here in my place who has a better stomach than I to suffer these injuries, for I have not enough patience to endure them. I do not comprehend your Excellence's decision about Bernardello, that, without making peace with any of the infinite number of enemies that he has, he can stay in the country wherever he chooses, and by the aid of these men of Le Verrucole always have a following of an armed company, and in his needs take refuge in the best fortress that your Excellence has in these parts, and that he can still keep on levying blackmail, as I have written to you on other occasions and even sent to tell you by word of mouth by the Captain of Justice. But if your Excellence does not think fit to provide for this, nor for the outrages that Battistino Magnano and Donatello and other scoundrels commit, who have taken the campanile of Careggine and have been in there several days as in a fortress of their own, I am not bound to trouble more about it than you choose to do. But, as such a disgrace touches my honour, I shall cry out and insist and pray and beseech your Excellence to summon me to Ferrara, sooner than leave me here with shame.¹

Alfonso appears to have been moved by this letter to take some action in the matter, as we find Messer Lodovico thanking him for the steps he had taken to satisfy his honour's demands. He already had got possession of the murderous Genese on his own account: 'And so I have him in the bottom of the tower with irons on his feet, nor do I fear that he will be taken from me, because I shall not risk any alleviations of his prison to please any man in the world.'² But an analogous protest, a year later, at the Duke's

¹ Letter cxxviii., January 30, 1524.

² Letter cxxxi., March 8, 1524.

receiving all the complaints made by local officials against the Commissary, brought nothing but a fierce ducal rebuke upon the latter's head.¹

In the early summer of 1524, the year that followed Pope Clement's election, Ariosto had been spending a few weeks at Ferrara. He was not entirely satisfied with his visit, for, while he was actually in the city, two of the worst ruffians of his flock, Ulivo and Niccolò da Pontecchio, who had been concerned in the murder of the Counts of San Donnino, had been freely pardoned by the Duke, without reference to him, for another of their numerous crimes. 'Your Excellence must forgive me, if I venture to complain of you a little,' he wrote to Alfonso; 'it seems to me that in every concern of the Garfagnini, while I was at Ferrara, I ought to have been consulted.'² He reached Montefiorino on his way back at the beginning of July, only to find the whole province in disorder. A quarrel having broken out between Giovanni de' Medici and the Marchesi Malaspina, the troops of the former had invaded Lunigiana and thence, while their leader was absent in Rome, had suddenly entered the Garfagnana, and surprised the fortress of Camporgiano, declaring that the Pope had ceded the whole province to their general. They were in secret understanding with certain outlaws and faction-leaders in the Garfagnana itself, including the two whom Alfonso had just pardoned, who promptly joined their ranks. Ariosto at once sent in all directions for troops, and hurried to Castelnovo, where he found that the inhabitants themselves had taken up arms in self-defence, and, aided by reinforcements from the Frignano, had shut the enemy up in Camporgiano. The poet, for once adequately supported by the Duke, was soon in a position not only to defend Castelnovo itself, but, with the aid of a force of cavalry from the Captain of Reggio, to take the field against the invaders. This, however, proved unnecessary. Giovanni's mercenaries quarrelled among themselves, and mortally wounded their commander, one Todeschino. A certain Ferrarese subject, with the romantic sounding name of Morgante Demino,

¹ See Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 98, 99.

² Letter cxxxvii., July 5, 1524.

arriving on the scenes with arquebusiers and light horse, apparently doubtful which side to support, seeing the plight of the invaders, declared for the Duke, persuaded the Medicean soldiers to retire into Lunigiana, and handed over Camporgiano together with the wounded Todeschino to the ducal agent whom they had held as prisoner. The wounded captain, examined by Ariosto, declared that the enterprise had been undertaken without the knowledge of Giovanni de' Medici, in the hope that he would have approved it if successful. The only result of the affair was to make the turbulent spirits of the Garfagnana more impatient than ever of the rule of the Commissary. Ariosto assured the Duke that they had not taken up arms for any love of his Excellence, but to protect their own goods and to get the chance of cutting to pieces their enemies of the rival faction who had joined the Medicean forces. 'I beseech your Excellence and the Secretaries,' he wrote, 'to keep secret whatever I write, whether bad or good, for God is my witness that no affection or hatred that I bear to one more than to another, but love of justice alone, impels me to write and tell you what happens.'¹

It was probably in the latter part of this year that Pistofilo wrote to Ariosto that, if he would like to be sent to Rome for a year or two as ambassador to Pope Clement, he would use his influence with the Duke to get him the post. We have not, indeed, got Messer Lodovico's actual answer, but only the poetical epistle it suggested—the seventh Satire, one of the most genial and entirely delightful of all his compositions, showing that even the Garfagnana, with its haunts not meet for Apollo, had not taken the poetry out of him. He no longer hopes for riches and has had his fill of honours. The delights of Rome, tempting though they are, cannot allure him from Ferrara—though, of course, his serious and learned correspondent would think him a lunatic if he confessed the reason:—

‘Se perchè amo sì il nido mi dimandi,
Io non te lo dirò più volentieri
Ch'io soglia al frate i falli miei nefandi ;

¹ Letters cxxxvii., cxxxviii., cxli., cxlii., July 5 to July 20, 1524. Cf. Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-105.

Chè so ben che diresti : Ecco pensieri
 D'huom che quarantanove anni a le spalle
 Grossi e maturi si lasciò l'altro hieri.

‘S'io ti fossi vicin, forse la mazza
 Per bastonarmi piglieresti, tosto
 Che m'udissi allegar che ragion pazza
 Non mi lasci da voi viver discosto.’¹

In fact, Lodovico felt that he could no longer live apart from the woman he loved, and chose her presence rather than the position at Rome, which was probably the highest prize that his sovereign could have offered him. At last, in April, 1525, the Duke promised to recall him to Ferrara; but he had still to wait a few months in Castelnovo until the arrival of his successor, Cesare Cattanei. His troubles here were not quite over. He had with him his beloved son Virginio, whom he was training up in the study of the Latin poets, and whose society had been his chief solace during these troubled, uncongenial years. A bully of the place assaulted and maltreated this youth in public, and the poet appealed to the Duke for redress. For once, Alfonso did not fail him. ‘We assure you,’ he wrote, ‘that we have been grievously displeased to hear what has happened, and we are indignant that one of our subjects should have been so daring and insolent as to have presumed to do violence to a son of a Commissary of ours, who represents our own person in that place. We shall most efficaciously commit to Messer Cesare to act in the matter with the severity that the nature of the case merits in itself, and the faith and diligence that you have used in our service. Be assured that we are as desirous that you should know that we desire and intend that this thing should be fully punished, as you yourself are that it should be so.’² Towards the end of June, Lodovico

¹ ‘If thou ask'st me why I so love the nest, I will not tell it thee more willingly than I do my shameful sins to the friar;

‘For I know well thou wouldst say: What thoughts for a man who the other day left full forty-nine ripe years behind his back!’

‘If I were near thee, thou wouldst perchance take a stick to beat me, as soon as thou heard'st me allege the mad reason that does not let me live away from you’ (*Sat.* vii. 163-168, 178-181).

² Letter of May 3, 1525, in Campori, *op. cit.*, p. 107 n. Cf. Cappelli, pp. xciv., xcv. According to the tradition, Cattanei was appointed to succeed Ariosto, because he had boasted in the Court that he would be able

left the Garfagnana and returned to Ferrara. He had been, one might almost say, a heroic failure; but he had certainly saved his own soul. For once, for more than three years, though in an immeasurably lower sphere than that of Dante, he had stood forward even as the greater poet of his country two centuries before, as the *vir praedicans iustitiam*.

in a month to liberate the Garfagnana from its outlaws; in this he was successful, but the injustice and rapacity of his rule caused his overthrow in a couple of years.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COMING OF MADAMA RENATA

WHILE Lodovico Ariosto had been ruling his master's troublesome flock in the Garfagnana, mighty events had shaken the Italian world. Francis I. had again invaded Italy and, in October, 1524, reoccupied Milan. Still hoping for French protection against the Pope, Duke Alfonso had sent assistance of money and munition of war to the King, who was blockading Antonio de Leyva in Pavia. Then, on February 24, 1525, came the most decisive battle of the sixteenth century; with his army crushed by the Spanish imperialists under Pescara and Lannoy in the park of Pavia, the King of France was the prisoner of the Emperor. Sings Messer Lodovico:—

‘Ma quella che di noi fa come il vento
D’ arida polve, che l’ aggira involta,
La leva fin’ al cielo, e in un momento
A terra la ricaccia, onde l’ha tolta,
Fa ch’ intorno a Pavia crede di cento
Mila persone haver fatto raccolta
Il Re, che mira a quel che di man gli esce,
Non se la gente sua si scema o cresce.

‘Così per colpa de’ ministri avari,
E per bontà del Re che se ne fida,
Sotto l’ insegne si raccoglion rari,
Quando la notte il campo all’ arme grida ;
Che si vede assalir dentro a i ripari
Dal sagace Spagnuol, che con la guida
Di duo del sangue d’ Avalo ardiria
Farsi nel cielo e ne lo ’nferno via.

‘Vedete il meglio de la nobiltade
Di tutta Francia alla campagna estinto ;
Vedete quante lance e quante spade
Han d’ ognintorno il Re animoso cinto ;

Vedete che 'l destrier sotto gli cade ;
 Nè per questo si rende, o chiama vinto ;
 Ben ch' a lui solo attenda, a lui sol corra
 Lo stuol nimico, e non è ch' il soccorra.

' Il Re gagliardo si difende a piede,
 E tutto de l'hostil sangue si bagna ;
 Ma virtù al fine a troppa forza cede,
 Ecco il Re preso, et eccolo in Hispania ;
 Et a quel di Pescara dar si vede
 Et a chi mai da lui non si scompagna,
 A quel del Vasto, le prime corone
 Del campo rotto e del gran Re prigione.'¹

Pope Clement procured the exclusion of the Duke of Ferrara from the League of Cognac, concluded in May, 1526, after the liberation of the French King, between the Holy See, France, Venice, and Florence, for the restoration of the Milanese duchy to Francesco Sforza, who was being besieged in the citadel of Milan by the imperialists. Alfonso was thus compelled to adhere to the Emperor, who, in October, renewed to him the investiture of his imperial fiefs (Modena, which was still in the hands of the Church, and Reggio, which he had already recovered), with the addition of Carpi (from which the Spaniards had finally ousted Alberto Pio in the previous year), as the dowry of his bastard daughter, Margaret, in the event of her proposed marriage with Don Ercole. He also made Alfonso his captain-general in Italy, which, however,

¹ 'But she who does with us as the wind with dry dust, that whirls it round, lifts it to the skies, and in one moment hurls it back to the earth whence it has taken it, makes the King believe that he has assembled a hundred thousand persons round Pavia, for he looks at what passes from his hand, not whether his forces are waning or waxing strong.

'So, by the fault of avaricious ministers and the goodness of the King who trusts in them, few are gathered under the standards when at night the army cries to arms ; for it sees itself assailed within its trenches by the sagacious Spaniard, who with the guidance of two of the blood of Avalos would dare to make his way through Heaven and Hell.

'See, the flower of the nobility of all France lifeless on the field ; see, how many lances and how many swords have girt the valiant King on every side. See, his horse falls under him ; nor for this does he yield or own himself beaten, although the foemen's throng marks him alone, rushes upon him alone, and there is none to succour him.

'The gallant King defends himself on foot, and is all bathed in the blood of the foe ; but valour at last yields to mighty odds ; behold him taken, and behold him in Spain. And to Pescara's lord, and to him of Vasto who never leaves him, are seen given the first glories of the army shattered and the great King captured' (*Orlando Furioso*, xxxiii. 50-53).

was little more than a nominal honour. Guicciardini and Varchi would lay the horrors of the sack of Rome in the following year, 1527, to Alfonso's charge. Like the Marchese del Vasto, who retired from his command, Alfonso did not accompany that mixed barbarian horde of Spanish cut-throats and Lutheran fanatics in their commission of one of the greatest crimes of history, on the plea of having to guard his own states from the hostility of the League; but he nevertheless supplied Bourbon with money, provisions, and ammunition, to such an extent that Machiavelli declared that he was destined to be the arbiter of the war. Even if he did not actually urge Bourbon to push on to Rome without delay (as Guicciardini and Varchi declare he did), he at least watched, without remorse or regret, the fatal march, and the thunderbolt falling upon his papal enemies. At the worst, his conduct was less abominable than that of the Duke of Urbino; 'this Duke, who knew no greater joy than to be avenged on those he hated,' as the Queen of Navarre wrote of him, was in supreme command of the forces of the League, but remembered only that the Pope, whose general he was, was the cousin of the man who had driven him from his duchy. Guicciardini, who was his lieutenant in this war, thought him either a great coward or a great traitor; and all his efforts to rouse him to take action against the foe were in vain. The nephew of Pope Julius would not assail the invaders, though his troops outnumbered theirs, but, with the army of the League, watched from a safe distance the imperial hell-hounds ravaging the Eternal City:—

‘Vedete gli homicidii e le rapine
In ogni parte far Roma dolente :
E con incendi e stupri le divine
E le profane cose ire ugualmente.
Il campo de la Lega le ruine
Mira d' appresso, e 'l pianto e 'l grido sente,
E dove ir dovria inanzi, torna in dietro,
E prender lascia il successor di Pietro.’¹

¹ ‘See murder and rapine making Rome bewail on every side, and things divine and worldly swept alike along with burning and outrage. The army of the League watches the devastation near at hand, and hears the cries and lamentations; and where it should go forward, it turns back, and lets the successor of Peter be taken’ (*Orlando Furioso*, xxxiii. 55).

At least no blame can attach itself to Duke Alfonso for taking advantage of the situation to recover his own. He had already, in March, received Carpi from the hands of the imperial authorities—the dispossessed Alberto being with the Pope in Rome. As soon as the news of Clement's helpless plight reached him, he assembled a small force, and from Finale, on Sunday, June 2, despatched his herald Baracchino to the gate of Modena to demand the surrender of that city.

A great change had come over the temper of the Modenese since last they had listened to their former sovereign's summons. Filippo Nerli had disgusted them with Florentine and papal government. When Guicciardini's strong hand was removed, the factions had broken loose again. A bloody feud between the Forni and the Tassoni had been even more bloodily repressed. The pestilence had come, and upon the pestilence had followed famine; in July, 1526, the crowd had assailed Nerli on his way from Mass at the Duomo, clamouring for bread. Nerli was cruel and unjust, where Guicciardini had been firm and impartial. Discontent had grown apace, while, without, Lodovico Rangone's soldiery had been unable to cope with the incursions that the Spaniards from Carpi had made into the Modenese territory.

When Baracchino made his appearance at the Porta Salexe, Filippo Nerli and Lodovico Rangone put him off until they had time (in imitation of Guicciardini's proceedings on a similar occasion) to make a sudden proclamation of exemption from the duties on wine and at the gates. The people shouted *Chiesa, Chiesa*, but 'not very joyfully,' and the herald was admitted. The ladies of the Rangone family had fled with their possessions to Bologna on the previous morning.

To the council assembled in the Castello, in presence of Nerli and Rangone, Baracchino delivered his message. The Duke demanded a safe-conduct for a gentleman of his, whom he would send to negotiate things to the advantage of the city, or let the citizens themselves send delegates to him with full credentials; he would pardon every one freely, 'like a royal Lord.' 'And, if they refuse, tell them that I want Modena because it is mine, and because the Majesty of the Emperor has invested me with it. If they will not give it to me for love, I shall take it for myself by force; and let them

look to it, lest a worse thing befall them than the landsknechts have done in Rome.'

The papal officials and the city magnates made some show of wishing to defend the place for the Church; but the people seemed in high spirits at a prospect of a change of government. Alfonso, on receiving his answer, had collected more troops, and arrived at Rubiera. On June 5, Nerli and Rangone told the Conservatori that it was impossible to resist. The next morning four ambassadors of the Commune went to Duke Alfonso at Rubiera, and returned with the assurance that he would grant more than they demanded, and that he pardoned everybody everything. On June 6, 1527, early in the afternoon, Alfonso entered Modena in triumph, with horse and foot and artillery, 'with great joy of the people,' but in a heavy rain. He rode first to the Duomo, where he took the indulgence at the tomb of St. Geminianus, and then to the Castello, where he received the keys, always accompanied by the chief magistrates and citizens, while the crowd shouted, 'Duca, Duca, Alfonso, Alfonso.' It was taken as a good omen that, as he dismounted from his horse at the Castello, the weather became fine. To the Conservatori, who waited on him a little later, he said that he would grant them what they wanted and more than they asked, that he would be a good father and brother to all, and would spend his possessions and his own life for his most faithful city of Modena.¹ Thus did Modena return to the obedience of its 'natural sovereigns,' and not until the French Revolution did the Modenese ever experience other rulers than the princes of the House of Este, save for one brief period to which we shall presently come.

The advance of Lautrec into the duchy of Milan at the beginning of August, with a French army of nearly thirty thousand men, while Andrea Doria took the sea under the same royal banner, caused a further shifting of the scenes.

¹ Tomasino de' Bianchi, ii. pp. 239-243; Sandommini, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-76; Pistofilo, cap. lxxvi. On April 20, 1528, Alfonso made Tomasino a knight; 'And this he did,' writes the modest chronicler (i. p. 372), 'because I had deserved it through having been a most faithful subject, and because I had done useful and honourable things in the city of Modena for all the commonweal, and especially the present chronicle; and so his Excellence bade me persevere in these good works, and especially in this chronicle.'

Genoa and Alessandria surrendered; Pavia was taken and sacked. Alfonso found himself once more constrained to change sides. At the end of October, ambassadors and agents of all the confederate powers against the Emperor met at Ferrara under the presidency of the Papal Legate, Cardinal Cibo (in the name of the Cardinals at Parma, Pope Clement being still a prisoner in the Castello Sant' Angelo); and the Duke of Ferrara, reluctantly and under pressure, joined the League. He was promised the free investiture of Ferrara; the abolition of the restrictions on salt-making at Comacchio; the uncontested possession of Modena, Reggio, and Rubiera, as well as Carpi (notwithstanding that this latter town had only been ceded to him by the Emperor as Margaret's dowry), with the addition of Novi (the last fortress still held by Alberto and Leonello Pio in Italy); the restitution of Cottignola and the Estensian palaces in Florence and Venice; the Cardinal's hat and the bishopric of Modena for his second son, Don Ippolito; and Renée of France, daughter of Louis XII. and sister-in-law of his successor, as wife for the hereditary prince of Ferrara, Don Ercole. In spite of these great advantages, Alfonso would have preferred to have kept faith with the Emperor, or at least to have remained neutral; but Lautrec from Parma threatened to advance upon Modena and Reggio, if he persisted in holding out. Thus compelled, he joined the League on November 15.

Cardinal Cibo, in the name of the Sacred College, had pledged the Pope to the fulfilment of those of these conditions that depended upon the Holy See. But, on Clement's release, Alfonso's ambassadors—first Vincenzo Mosti and then Roberto Boschetti—found him decidedly ill-disposed towards the Duke. Alfonso, said his Holiness, had been the instigator of the sack of Rome; the Legate had no powers to make these promises; and he absolutely refused to ratify the agreement.¹ The King of France, however, ratified it instantly, in spite of the indignant protests of Alberto Pio, who had taken refuge in France after the sack of Rome, and now, finding his last hopes of recovering his states thus dashed to the ground,

¹ Pistofilo, cap. lxxix-lxxxii.; Guicciardini, xviii. 5; Muratori, *op. cit.*, ii. pp. 340-352, where the complete text of the treaty is printed.

asked leave to retire from the Court.¹ In reality, the negotiations for the marriage of Ercole and Renée had been begun in the preceding January, 1527. Francis promised that she should have double the usual dowry of a royal princess of France, on the condition of her formally renouncing her rights on Brittany.

Ercole d'Este, born, as we saw, on April 4, 1508, had inherited alike the beauty of his mother and the statecraft of his father, who had already begun to share the government of his duchies with him. A poet, like his great-uncle Leonello, and an excellent musician, the first in all knightly exercises, Ercole was one of the most accomplished and gallant young princes of his day.² Not only Margaret of Austria, but the Pope's little kinswoman, Caterina de' Medici, had also in her turn been suggested to the Duke as a suitable wife for his son; but the latter had not been taken seriously. Renée of France (Renea or Renata, as the Italians called her) was more than two years Ercole's junior, having been born on October 25, 1510. Gaston de Foix, the future Emperor Charles, his brother Ferdinand, the King of Portugal, the Duke of Savoy, the Constable de Bourbon, Henry VIII. of England, had been the possible bridegrooms suggested for her hand, as the political needs and alliances of France had varied. Plain in face, but sweet and witty, with blue eyes and hair which her biographer thinks was naturally golden, she danced as gracefully as Ercole's own mother had done. She could not speak the Italian language, and had but little sympathy for anything Italian.

On April 3, 1528, Ercole started for France with a goodly retinue of gentlemen and servants, which increased as he passed through the duchy. He took a rather circuitous route to get to the Mt. Cenis, by way of Modena and Genoa, partly by sea and partly by land, because the direct route from Ferrara into Piedmont was blocked by a force of Spanish soldiery, whose intentions were doubtful and suspected. At

¹ Cf. Letter of Cardinal Salviati, nuncio in France, to the Apostolic Nuncio at Caesar's Court, November 6, 1527. In Fontana, *Renata di Francia*, i. p. 48.

² Two of his sonnets are preserved in the *Rime scelte dei Poeti Ferraresi*, p. 94. For a curious novella of how Ercole, 'in the first flower of his youth, conquered himself in love,' see Giraldi, *Ecatommitti*, vi. 3.

Chambéry the young prince was very cordially received by the Duke of Savoy. He reached Paris on May 20, kept the Feast of the Ascension there, and received a deputation of the Parliament. Mounted on horses presented to him by the King, he rode out to Saint-Germain on the 22nd, and was most affectionately welcomed by the royal family.

'As far as I have understood,' he wrote in cipher to his father the next day; 'the King wishes the marriage to be celebrated within three or four days. But Madama Renea is not beautiful; still, she will make up for this with her other good qualities. I have been told that the Pope and the Venetians have done their utmost to prevent this being concluded, and that the King has answered that he cannot fall short of his promise. In answer to my suggestion, his Majesty has instructed Monseigneur de Saint-Pol, who is coming to Lombardy as the lieutenant of his Majesty, to guard and defend the state and interests of your Lordship more than his own.'¹ 'As far as I can gather,' wrote Bartolommeo Prosperi, one of the Ferrarese agents, to the Duke, 'my Lord would have been content if Madama Renea had been more beautiful.' 'But I must tell your Excellence,' he adds, 'that never was there at this Court any prince who was so much honoured by the King and by all the Court in general, by women and men alike, as is the Lord Don Ercole. Verily, your Lordship can exult in having as gentle and virtuous a prince for son as nature could create. Words cannot express what an excellent impression he has made upon all.'²

On May 28, the betrothal took place, in the presence of the King and Louise of Savoy, the King and Queen of Navarre, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and a brilliant gathering of French and Ferrarese. 'My cousin,' said the Most Christian King, taking the young prince by the hand, 'I know that it has been said, and that it has also come to your knowledge, that I have made you come here, not with the intention of contracting this relationship, but in order to hold you as a pledge and a hostage, so that the Duke of Ferrara, your father, should be forced to be at my disposal. So I wish to show by the result,

¹ Letter of May 23, 1528. Fontana, i. pp. 28, 29.

² Despatches of May 23 and 27. Fontana, i. p. 35.

and make your enemies in Italy know, that I want you for a kinsman and a brother, and I have made you come here for this reason, and I intend you to have Madame Renée for your wife.'

This was a somewhat startling suggestion of an idea that (as Professor Fontana notes) had probably passed through the King's mind, and which he was now representing as a calumnious assertion on the part of the enemies of the House of Este. But Ercole answered with much discretion that he had never doubted the King's word, and that there was no need to hold him as a hostage, since the Duke and he were humble servants of his Majesty and the Most Christian Crown of France. Nevertheless, let the King do what he pleased with him, as his life and his person were in his Majesty's power. The King seemed pleased, and the ceremony passed off well; but Ercole received a hint afterwards that his Majesty intended to demand a loan of fifty thousand ducats from Ferrara for the war in Lombardy, and that Lautrec was dissatisfied, and expected more financial support than he was receiving from Alfonso.¹

Ercole and Renée were married at the Sainte-Chapelle on June 28, by the Papal Legate, Cardinal Giovanni Salviati (who was nominally, it will be remembered, Bishop of Ferrara). The bride was royally robed and crowned, with her golden hair flowing down over her shoulders. Much comment was excited by her appearance, as the crown was thought to be very significant of great designs on foot. 'I shall not describe the celebration of this function at length and in particular,' wrote the Venetian orator from Paris to the Doge; 'because I know that your Excellence is occupied with other things than hearing accounts of festivities; but these details I do not think I ought to pass over in silence. Madame Renea has been married in regal attire in the fashion of the Queens of France, with a mantle of purple velvet lined with ermine over a robe embroidered with gold, of which mantle the sister of the King of Navarre carried the train. She wore on her head the crown of a queen, and an infinity of jewels, and a pectoral adorned with so many emeralds and

¹ Letter of May 29, 1528, from Ercole to Alfonso. Fontana, i. pp. 37-39.

diamonds that they were worth a kingdom; and she was led to and from the church by the hand by the Most Christian King,'¹ 'Then followed the most serene Madama, Mother of the Most Christian Majesty, with the children of his Majesty, to wit, two daughters and a boy, the Duke of Angoulême, who is most beauteous of face, with many damsels of noble blood. Next came the Lord Don Ercole, with many jewels on his breast and in his cap, accompanied by the most serene King of Navarre, with all the princes who are here at the Court. and all the orators of the most holy League who are here, and after them an infinite number of gentlemen and lords. And when they were come to the door of the said Sainte-Chapelle they stopped, and there the most reverend Legate Salviati read the marriage ceremony according to the usage of this country, and the ring was placed upon the finger of Madama Renea. Then, having entered the church, they heard Mass celebrated by a bishop with much music and singing, and, at the giving of the Pax, the bridegroom and the bride kissed each other. After the Communion, a little to eat and drink was given to both the two.' After Mass, the procession returned to the palace to the sound of music, and a sumptuous banquet followed. 'When the dinner was finished, they began to dance. The first dance was of the most serene King of Navarre with Madama Renea the bride; Monseigneur de Guise, brother of the most illustrious Duke of Lorraine, danced the second with Madama Maddalena, daughter of the Most Christian King; the Lord Don Ercole danced the third with the most serene Queen of Navarre; the fourth was of the Most Christian King with one of his mother's damsels; and in these pleasures they continued until late. The most reverend Legate Salviati and the other ambassadors went away home, and the Most Christian King retired with Madama Renea and the other ladies for a little. Afterwards the tables were laid, and they supped; and after supper the Most Christian King, the most reverend Cardinal of Lorraine, Monseigneur de Guise, and many other lords and gentlemen disguised them-

¹ *Copia di lettere di l'orator veneto in Francia, date in Paris, die 29 Junii, 1528.* Sanudo, xlviil. col. 216.

selves in fresh costumes, and danced until midnight, and then an end was made. And the bridegroom went with the bride to bed, and we may suppose that both were long-ing for the hour to withdraw.’¹

‘Most illustrious Madama,’ wrote Duke Alfonso to his new daughter-in-law, ‘the messages which Don Ercole, my son and your consort, has sent me in your name, have been most acceptable to me, and I thank your Ladyship for them. I am expecting you with supreme desire; and, if I cannot promise you those great things that are in the Royal Court which you are leaving, I verily promise that you will find in me all that I have written you in my other letters, and you will be sovereign lady of everything. For the present I will say no more, save that I commend me to your Ladyship, and pray you to commend me as most you can to their Majesties, the King, Madama, and the Queen of Navarre.’²

But there were still complications and prolonged negotiations in progress. Renée’s dowry was not forthcoming, and, instead of the greater part of it, the King offered French fiefs: the dukedom of Chartres, the county of Gisors, and the lordship of Montargis. ‘I have asked for Madame Renée as my bride,’ answered Ercole, ‘not because I was desirous of money, but for my honour; and I am content with what pleases your Majesty.’ There were greater designs on foot, of making Ercole captain of the Florentines and Duke of Milan; and Cardinal Salviati, watching the whole game with jealous eyes, suspected that the French were contemplating the possibility of building up a north Italian kingdom for the young pair, and wrote to Rome urging the Pope to keep good guard over Parma and Piacenza.³

In the meanwhile, the death of Lautrec and the desertion of Andrea Doria had shattered the French expectations in the south of Italy, and Genoa had become imperialistic. Saint-Pol continued to uphold the royal cause in Lombardy; but Ferrara itself was horribly devastated by the pestilence,

¹ *Copia di una lettera da Paris*, etc. Sanudo, xlvi. coll. 260, 261.

² Fontana, i. p. 68. The Duke had sent Renée jewels to the value of more than one hundred thousand ducats. Pistofilo, cap. lxxxij.

³ Fontana, i. pp. 52, 58.

and the papal agents were ceaseless in their plotting against Duke Alfonso. 'The pestilence,' writes Pistofilo, 'began in March and lasted until the middle of the autumn, and, although many nobles and citizens fled to their villas, it was so deadly that more than fifteen thousand persons died. The Duke would never abandon his city, but always stayed isolated in Castello Vecchio, with a small and lonely company; albeit sometimes he went into the country for three or four days, and then returned to be present to see and understand the needs of his people and alleviate their sufferings, as he did, by providing the Commune with corn and money.' In August, thinking that the city would be easy to occupy in its almost deserted state, Uberto da Gambarà, who was then papal governor of Bologna, designed to bring up his troops and assail Ferrara in the night; the Bishop of Casale, who was in Piacenza as commissary of the papal forces, and Girolamo Pio (a brother of the faithful Marco di Giberto Pio), to whom Alfonso had intrusted the command of all his troops in Reggio, were more or less implicated. The last-named, arrested and brought to Ferrara, confessed the whole. Alfonso promptly complained to the King of France and the other Christian princes.¹ Cardinal Salviati wrote to Rome, complaining that he had been kept entirely in the dark in the matter, but professed his belief that a great part of the affair was a mere fiction, possibly got up to hasten Don Ercole's departure from France.²

The bridal train at length left Paris on September 16, Francis and Louise of Savoy professing the utmost solicitude for Renée's happiness, and bidding Ercole in their name write to exhort Alfonso to treat her affectionately, and especially to give her a magnificent reception on her arrival. The King's mother, hinting not obscurely that Renée was a difficult character who would have to be much caressed and humoured, showed considerable curiosity about Lucrezia Borgia, to whose place the young French princess was going to succeed. 'Madama in particular,' wrote Ercole to Alfonso, 'asked me how my Lady Mother of good memory was treated,

¹ Pistofilo, cap. lxxxiii., lxxxiv.

² Letter to Jacopo Salviati, September 5, 1528. Fontana, i. p. 86. Guicciardini implies that Girolamo Pio had plotted to surrender Reggio.

and what kind of life she led.' The King having questioned him about jousts and tournaments, Ercole further asked his father to issue an edict that men and women in Ferrara should put off their mourning for the victims of the plague, at least for all the Carnival.¹ In Renée's train were Bernardo Tasso (the only Italian in her service), whom she made her secretary, and an intriguing lady, Madame de Soubise, who was destined to wreck the happiness of her married life.

Milan being still in the hands of the soldiers of the Emperor, Francesco Sforza met Ercole and Renée at Cremona, and Saint-Pol escorted them with French horse and foot from Alessandria to Pavia, which they reached on November 2. Here the Duke of Urbino, who was captain of the Venetian army, visited them, and the Bishop of Casale (who, as we have seen, had been privy to the plot of Girolamo Pio) came and invited them to Piacenza, saying that he had orders from the Pope to treat them as if they were the nephews of his Holiness. Ercole declined the invitation.² Gurone d'Este greeted them in Alfonso's name on the frontier at Brescello. The Duke himself with his household met them half-way between Brescello and Reggio, 'and received them with the greatest joy that can be imagined,' writes the faithful secretary, 'at re-beholding his first-born son after so many months, accompanied by a lady of the most noble and honoured blood in Christendom.'³ They stayed some days in the Citadel of Reggio, whence the Duke brought them to Modena where the state reception had been prepared—that city being chosen partly because of the plague at Ferrara, partly as an open sign to the world that Modena was inviolably of the Estensi. Before he left Ferrara, Alfonso had had Girolamo Pio beheaded in the Castello Vecchio on October 25: 'And it is said that the Duke has done this because he was expecting the bride,

¹ Letters in Fontana, i. pp. 63, 64, 66. 'Farewell, brave Moor; use Desdemona well.' In his *Critical Essays on the Plays of Shakespeare*, Mr. W. W. Lloyd remarks: 'The words strengthen the sense of separation between the Moorish and the Venetian noble, for addressed by one equal to another they would justify an answer with the hand at the sword-hilt.' On the contrary, the senator's words to Othello are similar to those which the princes of the Renaissance habitually addressed to each other on these occasions.

² Fontana, i. p. 67.

³ Pistofilo, cap. lxxxv.

and would not have been able to refuse her his pardon, which it is known that she would have asked of him. So has he saved her the trouble and punished a rebel.'¹

Late in the afternoon of November 12, Renée made her entry into Modena in a litter, followed by her ladies riding. Besides Alfonso and Ercole, she was accompanied by ambassadors of France, Florence, and Venice; but none of the Italian princes were present. The Dukes of Urbino and Milan and the Marquis of Mantua had been invited, but had kept away for fear of offending the Pope. At the Porta Cittanova the Conservatori met the bride, with a baldacchino of white silk carried by thirty Modenese youths, under which they brought her to the Castello. Although the Duke had strictly forbidden, under pain of death, that any one should lay hands upon the mules and litter or tear up the baldacchino (according to the usual fashion of the day), 'a presumptuous foreigner' tried to begin the scramble for the latter, and was roughly handled for his pains; but, when Renée had descended, the young men quietly took possession of the mules and litter. The next day, one of the ducal officials was sent to offer them thirty scudi for these; but they scouted the suggestion, urging that the Reggians had been given twenty-five, and that they were worth much more than the Reggians. At length, finding that they could get no more, they gave the mules and litter as a free present to Don Ercole, because 'they wished to keep their reputation.'

Renée entered the Castello to the usual accompaniment of salvos of artillery, firing off of arquebuses, ringing of bells and sound of musical instruments, 'so that it seemed that the air and sky were falling down.' Isabella d'Este, who had come from Mantua two days before to act as hostess, received her, surrounded by the Modenese ladies. The usual round of dances, receptions, and races followed, in which Alfonso left everything to Don Ercole, going away to the Rangone palace, where he lodged, when the dancing began and absent-

¹ Tomasino de' Bianchi, ii. p. 416. When, in the following January, 1529, Girolamo's nephew, Giberto (the son of Alessandro Pio and Angela Borgia), married Elisabetta d'Este, the bastard daughter of the late Cardinal Ippolito, Alfonso gave him his uncle's confiscated possessions, instead of the twelve thousand ducats that the Cardinal had left his daughter. *Ibid.*, pp. 450, 457.

ing himself from the races. 'The Lord Duke,' writes the chronicler of Modena, 'did not move from his lodging to see the *palio* run, because, when the others are making merry and exulting, he keeps watch.' In spite of the great poverty of Modena and its district, costly presents were made to the old Duke, as well as to Ercole and Renée, from the city itself, from communities great and small in the contado, local magnates and nobles, convents and the like—consisting sometimes of provisions, sometimes of velvets, silks, and brocades. And all this time everything was at famine prices: 'So many poor go through the city crying, *I am dying of hunger*, that it is a compassion to see them, and small are the alms that have been given them by the Court.'¹

Two more Venetian ambassadors, Andrea Leoni and Vettor Grimani, arrived on November 19, with a whole troop of musicians, singers, pages, and buffoons. The Duke and Ercole went out to meet them, and were insistent in honouring and reverencing them. After delivering their message from the Republic to Renée in the Castello, they drew off their great cloaks of crimson velvet lined with vair, and left them with her as a gift; and she, 'having been already informed that this was the custom of the most serene Venetian Republic in such cases, accepted them with a gay and most kindly countenance.' Night having fallen, they were solemnly escorted with flaming white torches to their lodging in the house of Lodovico Molza.² The festivities, however, had to be cut short, as news came from France that the Seigneur de Chaumont, Renée's kinsman, was dead.

The ladies of Modena were very much dissatisfied and offended at the way the whole celebration had been managed. They were especially angry because, on the evening of Renée's entry, they had been let go home without supper and without an escort from the Castello. Further they said that afterwards, when they paid their first ceremonial visit to Madama, not sufficient honour had been shown them. In consequence, very few of them had been to the subsequent dances and festivities in the Castello. In fact, there was a general

¹ T. de' Bianchi, ii. pp. 418-438.

² Sanudo, xlix. col. 183; T. de' Bianchi, *loc. cit.*; Pistofilo, cap. lxxxv.

impression that the thing had been done in a stingy and miserly way, and that the Duke was carrying off presents and giving nothing in return. 'His Excellence, in honour of this wedding, has granted very few favours to individual Modenese, nor many of the petitions that the Community has presented to him.' On their side, both the Commune and individual citizens had spent their money lavishly, and all the Court with the ambassadors and their trains (some three thousand persons in all) had apparently received free lodging from the former. At least the Duke expressed himself right well contented with what had been done. 'I have set down all this,' writes the chronicler of Modena, 'to show whoso reads in what sort of state this city stands at present; but it has put aside everything in order to do its duty towards its lord, as a people that loves its sovereign. Learn, reader, from this chronicle what you should do when your lord comes to your house with his courtiers and his other friends, for you must set aside every other consideration in order to do him honour, nor make any account of labour and expense.'¹

Alfonso left Modena on November 23, with an escort of light horse and men-at-arms, and returned to Ferrara. According to the Ferrarese version of the affair, he narrowly escaped a papal ambush on the way. Before starting, he had shown the two Venetian ambassadors at Modena a letter which he had received, warning him that Paolo Luzzasco, with a force of two hundred light horse and three hundred arquebusiers from Bologna, had ineffectually tried to intercept these ambassadors, and was now lying in wait for him on the banks of the Po, to take him on his way to Ferrara. This plot, he said, was arranged by the protonotary Uberto da Gambara, and it was confirmed from many sources. 'I shall make Paolo Luzzasco remember this,' he added. Having reached Ferrara in safety on the 25th, Alfonso sent back his escort to Modena and ordered a strong force of arquebusiers from the Bastia to join them, in order to protect the bridle party on its way. The Ferrarese ambassadors at Rome and Paris, Galeazzo Tassoni and Enea Pio, were instructed to protest in the most forcible fashion. To Tassoni, Pope Clement

¹ T. de' Bianchi, ii. pp. 436, 437.

expressed his regret and declared that the thing had been done without his knowledge. Enea Pio urged upon the King of France that the injury was one done to himself in the person of Renée, and that, if the Pope were innocent of it, his Majesty should insist upon the guilty persons being punished according to their deserts. Cardinal Salviati, as usual, had heard nothing at all about it, and professed complete scepticism. Ultimately, the Pope assured the King that Luzzasco's gathering of troops was not intended against the Duke of Ferrara, but simply for the protection of Bologna; and the matter was allowed to drop.¹

In the meanwhile, great efforts had been made at Ferrara to rouse the citizens from the apathy that had followed the pestilence, to make them come back from the country, put off their mourning, and appear in festive attire. The Marchesana Isabella had preceded the bridal cortège by two days, to be ready to do the honours of her brother's capital. Accompanied by the ambassadors of France, Venice, and Florence, Ercole and Renée left Modena on November 29, and, coming by way of Finale and Bondeno (where the younger Ippolito, Archbishop of Milan, met them), spent the night of November 30 at Belvedere.

Escorted by the Duke and Ippolito, the bridal pair came down the canal on a bucentaur the next afternoon, December 1, and landed at the Porta S. Paolo, saluted by a tremendous and deafening roar of all Alfonso's famous artillery, which, men said, was heard as far as Bologna. Thence the procession passed through the gate to the Duomo, all the streets through which it went being covered with red, white, and green drapery (the colours of the Estensi then as of modern Italy to-day), while young men of noble birth in troops, dressed in black and crimson silk with white feathers, kept the way through the crowd with rose-coloured wands. In front of all came Diego, the Spanish buffoon, riding on a dromedary, followed by a band of children dressed in white

¹ Sanudo, xlix. coll. 187, 188; Pistofilo, cap. lxxxvi.; Fontana, i. pp. 87-89. For many years, Alfonso had kept a number of paid spies in the Pope's service, to keep him informed of all the latter's designs against him. One cannot help suspecting that some of these persons occasionally raised false alarms, to show that they were earning their money.

and carrying little flags; next came the clergy and friars of the city. Preceded by a troop of light horse, came all the gentlemen of Ferrara, surrounding Duke Alfonso himself, superbly mounted and wearing the collar of St. Michael, accompanied by the French ambassador and another French nobleman. Then, in front of the baldacchino, were the canons of the Duomo and Monsignor Gillino Gillini, Bishop of Comacchio. The baldacchino was of white silk, carried and surrounded by a hundred young gentlemen dressed in the same fashion as those who were keeping the way; and under it Renée sat in her purple litter, with Don Ercole, wearing like his father the collar of St. Michael, riding by her side. Behind the litter rode Madame de Soubise with Renée's French maids of honour, one by one, followed by a long line of carriages with more ladies of France and all the chief gentlewomen of Ferrara, who left the procession when it reached the piazza and dismounted at the palace, to keep company with the Marchesana Isabella, who was waiting at the steps of the Corte to receive the bride. In the meanwhile, Renée descended from her litter at the door of the Duomo, and, while the organs pealed out and the ducal choristers sang, she was led up to the high altar, where she knelt and was solemnly blessed by the Bishop of Comacchio. Alfonso Trotti, the factor-general, then presented her with the keys of the city in a great basin of silver; after which she was brought across to the palace and welcomed by Isabella who conducted her to her apartments, which were all hung with fine French tapestry of gold and silk, 'a wondrous feast for the eyes.' 'Madama Renea was dressed in the same costume as she wore when she was espoused in France, a robe of silk of cloth of gold, very beautiful, with a necklace of very large pearls and many other jewels, and with the crown upon her head—which has given rise to much comment, as she is not a queen, albeit she is daughter of a king.'¹

We need not linger over the details of the festivities that followed. These pageants and entertainments of the Italian

¹ Letter from Luigi da Gonzaga to the Marchese Federigo, December 1, 1528. Fontana, i. pp. 76-78; Agostino Faustini, pp. 7, 8; T. de' Bianchi, ii. p. 444.

Courts of the sixteenth century are all very like each other, and, to our modern notions, seem somewhat monotonous. Whoso desires to study particulars of the banquets—course after course of extravagantly luxurious viands (while in other cities of the duchy the poor were wandering through the streets crying aloud that they were dying of cold and hunger), alternating with choice music, elegant but empty masquerades, the usual somewhat dull buffoonery performed round the tables by the clowns and jesters of the Duke, the Prince and the Archbishop—may read them in full in a very curious little book by the chief entertainer of the Court, which was dedicated to the second Ippolito d'Este on the occasion of the publication of his elevation to the cardinalate.¹ Only one entry need concern us here :—

‘A supper of flesh and fish, which the most illustrious Lord Don Ercole d'Este, then Duke of Chartres, made for the most illustrious and most excellent Lord Duke of Ferrara his father, the most illustrious Madama the Marchesa of Mantua, the most illustrious Madama Renea his wife, the most reverend Archbishop of Milan, the most illustrious Lord Don Francesco, one ambassador of the Most Christian King, two ambassadors of the most serene Venetian Senate, and other gentlemen and gentlewomen, both Ferrarese and French, who were in all to the number of one hundred and four at the first table; excepting the most illustrious and most excellent Duke of Ferrara, the most illustrious Duchess of Chartres, and the most illustrious Marchesa of Mantua; for these three ate together apart from the others. And this was on Sunday, the 24th day of January, 1529.

‘First, the Sala Grande of the Palace was adorned with the great tapestry curtains and other hangings in magnificent wise, where before supper there was represented a comedy by Messer Lodovico Ariosto, called *La Cassaria*.’

¹ *Libro novo nel qual s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivanda secondo la diversità de i tempi, così di Carne come di Pesce. Et il modo d'ordinar banchetti, apparecchiar tavole, fornir palazzi, et ornar camere per ogni gran Principe. Opera assai bella, e molto bisognevole a Maestri di casa, a Scalchi, a Credenzieri, et a Cuochi. Composta per M. Cristoforo di Messisbugo, Venice, 1556. An earlier edition was published at Ferrara in 1549. Ippolito was made a cardinal, simultaneously with Bembo, by Paul III. in 1538.*

It is probable that Ariosto had accompanied the Duke to Reggio and Modena, with the rest of the ducal household, to meet the young French duchess. It is at least certain that he was the guiding spirit in directing the series of comedies which were performed in Ferrara after her arrival and in the Carnival which followed. Two of his own plays were thus produced; the *Cassaria*, in its second form in verse, a very different thing to that earlier version in prose which had been played before the Court in the days of the elder Ippolito and Lucrezia some twenty years before; and an entirely new work, the *Lena*, of which more in its place. In the latter performance, Garofolo tells us, the prologue—a slight composition, but agreeably free from the obscene jests and suggestions that usually disfigured these recitations—was spoken by the little twelve-year-old prince, Don Francesco, familiarly known both in Venice and Ferrara as ‘Don Checchin’ :—

‘Dianzi ch’ io vidi questi gentilhuomini
 Qui ragunarsi, e tante belle giovani,
 Io mi credea per certo che volessino
 Ballar, che ’l tempo me lo par richiedere ;
 E per questo mi son vestito in maschera.
 Ma poi ch’ io sono entrato in una camera
 Di questo, et ho veduto circa a sedici
 Persone travestite in diversi abiti,
 E che si dicon l’un l’altro e rispondono
 Certi versi, m’avveggiò che far vogliono
 Una de le sciocchezze che son soliti,
 Ch’essi Comedia chiamano, e si credono
 Di farle bene. Io che so quel che detto mi
 Ha il mio maestro, che fra le poetiche
 Invention non è la più difficile,
 E che i poeti antiqui ne facevano
 Poche di nuove, ma le traducevano
 Da i Greci ; e non ne fe alcuna Terentio
 Che trovasse egli ; e nessuna o pochissime
 Plauto, di queste c’ hoggidi si leggono ;
 Non posso non maravigliarmi e ridere
 Di questi nostri, che quel che non fecero
 Gli antiqui loro, che molto più seppono
 Di noi sì in questa e sì in ogn’ altra scientia,
 Essi ardiscan di far. Tuttavia, essendoci
 Già ragunati qui, stiamo un po’ taciti
 A riguardarli. Non ci può materia,

Ogni modo, mancar hoggi da ridere ;
 Chè, se non rideremo de l'argutia
 De la Comedia, almen de l'arrogantia
 Del suo compositor potremo ridere.'¹

As Renée knew practically no Italian, she could have derived but little satisfaction from the *Cassaria*, and was at least spared from being scandalised at the *Lena*. For her special entertainment, Alfonso commissioned a Frenchman to prepare a French translation of the *Menaechmi* of Plautus—an Italian version, it will be remembered, having been one of the comedies that had welcomed Lucrezia Borgia to Ferrara a quarter of a century before. A letter from one of the Mantuan agents in Ferrara to Federigo Gonzaga tells us that it had been intended for the great banquet of Sunday evening, January 24, at which, as we have seen, Ariosto's *Cassaria* was performed instead.² We learn, however, from Garofolo that the *Menaechmi* in its French garb was eventually represented, and that the Frenchman, being a poor Latin scholar, made his translation not from the original, but from an Italian version specially written for the occasion by Messer Lodovico himself. 'Not only did Ariosto translate it,' writes Garofolo, 'but he composed a summary of each act of the play in a few Italian verses, which were recited before each act after some graceful and witty lines of his own, whilst the comedy itself was represented in the French language; this was done in order that those who did not know the language of France might

¹ 'Just now when I saw these gentlemen assembled here, and so many fair damosels, I took it for certain that they meant to dance, for methinks the time calls for it; and therefore have I donned my mask. But since I have entered a chamber of this palace, and seen about sixteen persons disguised in diverse costumes, saying and answering certain verses to each other, I perceive that they intend to perform one of those usual follies that they call a comedy, and they think to do them well. I who know what my master has told me, that among poetical inventions there is none more difficult, and that the ancient poets made few new, but translated them from the Greeks (and Terence did not make one such, that he could find, and Plautus none or very few of those we read to-day), cannot but marvel and laugh at these friends of ours, who dare to attempt what their forebears did not do, who knew much more than we in this as in every other science. Nevertheless, as we are now assembled here, let us keep silent a little to watch them. Anyway, we cannot to-day lack matter for laughter; for, if we do not laugh at the wit of the comedy, we shall be able at least to laugh at the arrogance of its author.'

² Fontana, i. p. 99.

not be entirely deprived of the pleasure of this performance, and it was received by them with incredible delight.'

The marriage of Ercole and Renée was destined from the beginning to be an unhappy one. 'It is not through the fault of Madame Renée,' writes Duke Alfonso himself, in July, 1529, when the trouble began, 'who is of an excellent nature; but because of other persons.' The expenses of her household, used to the lavishness of the royal Court of France, were enormous, and out of all proportion to the condition of the Ferrarese duchy; her dowry and the rents of her lands from France came only in dribblets, and she insisted upon spending and dealing out enormous sums, 'many immoderate and ill-considered expenses,' as Alfonso put it. Her household was simply a French camp in Italy, dressed in French costumes, declined to speak Italian or to conform with the customs of the country. Complaints to and from Ferrara and France were incessant. Madame de Soubise, who was showing herself a mere agent of French policy, proved a veritable firebrand.

'Madame Renée,' wrote Alfonso to Lodovico Cato, his ambassador in France, 'is of so good a nature that through fault of hers no vexation nor complaint would ever be heard on either side, especially as we are entirely disposed to give satisfaction in everything, as far as it is possible to us and which we recognise to be reasonable. But we also know clearly that, as long as Madame de Soubise stays with her, there will be unpleasant recrimination both there and here; since she is of the nature and quality that their Majesties know better than we. If they pleased, they could deliver themselves and us from so many misunderstandings, and they can rely upon it that we should provide Madame Renée with a household and a lady of honour who would not be less good, and would be more adapted to the customs of the country. Nevertheless, if their Majesties take pleasure in continually hearing complaints, we shall supply them to them.'¹

The catastrophe of Renée's married life belongs to a later epoch of Ferrarese history, together with her sensational conversion to the doctrines of the Reformation. During Duke

¹ Fontana, i. pp. 122-124. The Duke prudently toned down the language of this letter before actually despatching it.

Alfonso's lifetime, the matter went but little further. There was still time for Ariosto to pay his poetical tribute to her in the *Orlando Furioso*, among the noble women of the House of Este, as the worthy successor of Lucrezia Borgia:—

‘Non voglio ch’ in silentio ancho Renata
 Di Francia, nuora di costei, rimagna,
 Di Luigi il duodecimo Re nata
 E de l’ eterna gloria di Bretagna.
 Ogni virtù ch’ in donna mai sia stata,
 Di’ poi che ’l fuoco scalda e l’ acqua bagna,
 E gira intorno il cielo, insieme tutta
 Per Renata adornar veggio ridutta.’¹

¹ ‘Nor would I that unrecorded should her daughter-in-law remain, Renée of France, born of the twelfth King Louis and of the eternal glory of Brittany. Every virtue that ever was in woman, since fire was hot and water cleansed and the heavens went round, do I see all gathered together to adorn Renée’ (*Orl. Fur.*, xiii. 72).

CHAPTER IX

AVE CAESAR IMPERATOR

‘IN 1529,’ writes Bonaventura Pistofilo, ‘King Francis began again persistently to urge Duke Alfonso to accept the title of lieutenant and captain-general in Italy of all the League, offering to have deposited in his hands a large sum of money, in order that of himself, without having the trouble of asking from others, he might have sure means of paying and supporting the army with which he wished him first to take, for himself and for his House, the Kingdom of Naples. For this purpose ambassadors were sent to him; but the Duke answered that he was content to preserve what was justly his own and had no desire of occupying what pertained to others, in which he claimed no right. And he refused the offered title and charge, not because he would not right well have had the courage to sustain it with honour; but because he had consideration for the Duke of Calabria, his cousin, whom he knew to claim rights in that kingdom; and also not to offend the Emperor, whom (albeit he had entered the League opposed to him) he had done his utmost not to injure, deeming that he had not justly merited his indignation nor hatred for what he had done under compulsion against his Caesarian Majesty, with whom by means of his orator (who was the Lord Marco Pio), and by other means, he strove to justify himself.’¹

There were rumours both of Charles and of Francis coming to Italy. ‘If your Majesty does not come,’ said the Venetian ambassador, Sebastian Giustinian, to the latter, in March, ‘the Florentines will change sides; Siena is imperial, I do not

¹ *Vita di Alfonso d’Este*, cap. lxxxix. This suggested conquest of Naples for the House of Este was, perhaps, the inner meaning of Renée’s royal crown. Don Ferrante of Aragon, Duke of Calabria, was the son of Frederick, the last Aragonese King of Naples, and nephew of Alfonso’s mother Leonora.

know about Ferrara, Mantua is Caesarian, the Pope will be with Caesar; but, if your Majesty comes, they will all be steadfast.’¹ But, by the middle of the year, all the powers were exhausted by their prolonged struggles, and Italy at last had a brief space in which to take breath. On June 29, peace and perpetual confederation between the Pope and the Emperor was solemnly concluded at Barcelona. Among the conditions were the restoration of the Medicean power to Florence in the person of the reputed son of the younger Lorenzo, Alessandro de’ Medici, to whom the Emperor promised his illegitimate daughter, Margaret, as wife; the surrender to the Pope of Cervia and Ravenna, Modena, Reggio, and Rubiera, in return for which he was to grant to the Emperor the investiture of the Kingdom of Naples. There was to be a meeting of the Pope and Emperor in Italy to arrange the general pacification of Christendom, and for the latter to receive the imperial crown. If called upon, Caesar would aid the Pope with the secular arm to acquire Ferrara as a fief lapsed to the Holy See, ‘on account of the felony and notorious rebellion of the illustrious Alfonso of Este, the usurper of that duchy of Ferrara.’² The fate of the duchy of Milan was left open for the present. With spiritual and temporal arms united, Pope and Emperor would proceed to extirpate the Lutheran heresy.

The conditions of the treaty were decidedly favourable to the Pope; but, although, before it was ratified, news reached the Emperor of the crushing defeat of Saint-Pol by the imperialists under Antonio de Leyva at Landriano, Charles still thought Clement’s friendship worth the price, and confirmed it without further modification.

‘Madame,’ wrote Renée to the Queen Mother of France, ‘I have heard of the agreement between the Pope and the Emperor, which is directly aiming at the ruin of the State of this House. It is a thing that grieves me greatly; but it would be far worse and would plunge me into despair, if I were not certain that the King and you, Madame, would not for anything suffer it to diminish nor fall into the hands of its enemies. And, even if the true servitude that I can bear you

¹ Sanudo, l. col. 67.

² The agreement concerning the Duke of Ferrara is in Sanudo, lii. coll. 443-445.

witness this House has always had and has to the Crown of France, and especially to the person of the King, did not move you, I am still convinced firmly that you would be moved by love of me, who have come here to obey and serve the King and you, and am therefore sure that you will never abandon it. And although, Madame, I deem that there is no need of my intercession, still I feel bound to pray you very humbly that every one may perceive that you still, as you have always shown until now, hold me in your good grace and love—to which very humbly I commend myself and all the State of this House. Madame, I pray Our Lord to grant you very good health and long life. This 22nd of July. Your very humble and very obedient daughter, Renée of France.’¹

The next day, Ercole wrote in a similar strain to the Grand Master of France, Montmorency :—

‘Your Lordship will have heard from what the Lord my Father writes to his ambassador the news of the agreement made between the Pope and the Emperor, and what the condition is of affairs here, and what is being designed against us. And because I have always had great faith in your Lordship, as I have known that you love me much, I have thought fit (without otherwise reminding you of the importance at every time to his Majesty of the conservation of this State, which has continually been devoted to him, and of which he has availed himself in every need as of a thing of his own) to beseech you, by the love you bear me, and by the faithful service of us all towards the Most Christian Crown, to be pleased to embrace our interests (which are also its own) and favour them with his Majesty, so that they may not be the prey of his and our enemies; for, if what they are designing were to succeed, besides the loss of us his servants, it would also be to his particular damage, because so much the less would be the obstacles they would encounter every time that they are disposed to assail him.’²

But no aid was to be looked for from France. Quickly upon the Treaty of Barcelona followed the conclusion of peace between the Emperor and King Francis (the famous *Pace*

¹ Molini, Document 295, to Louise of Savoy.

² Molini, Document 296.

delle Dame, because arranged by Margaret of Flanders and Louise of Savoy), which was published at Cambrai—‘a place destined by fate for the greatest conclusions,’ as Guicciardini says—on August 5. The French princes were to be released from their Spanish captivity, on payment of an immense ransom; the King was to renounce all his Italian claims, whether on the duchy of Milan, the kingdom of Naples, the county of Asti, or the state of Genoa. The Pope was included in the peace as principal; his authority was to be preserved, and all the towns that the Church had lost were to be restored. The Italian confederates and allies of France—Venice, Florence, Ferrara, and Milan—were shamelessly and cynically thrown over and betrayed, being only named in a way that glossed over the infamy of the King’s action and yet amounted to an exclusion. Venice was to satisfy the Emperor and his brother, the King of Hungary; Florence to satisfy the Emperor; Milan was not even mentioned; the Duke of Ferrara was to have recourse to the Emperor, in which case the Most Christian King would not fail to favour him with the Caesarian Majesty. When the peace was published, Francis refused to give audience to the orators of Venice, Florence, and Milan; he admitted the Ferrarese ambassador to his presence, but would only give him good words and a promise to send an envoy to Caesar on purpose to put the matter right. This meant less than nothing. Abandoned by his royal and treacherous French ally, Alfonso was left to the mercy of his two suzerains, the Pope and the Emperor.

Venice could, doubtless, take care of itself, and Milan was already in Caesar’s power. But it was only too clear that the liberty of Florence and the very existence of Ferrara were to be sacrificed to the secular ambitions of the Medicean Pope, as victims for the peace of Christendom.

Don Ercole had been appointed captain-general of the Florentine forces in the previous November, to please the King of France, and by the influence of that party in the State which wished to keep Florence bound to the French interests, with a secret understanding that the Duke himself would serve the Republic in person, if need should arise.¹

¹ Nardi, ii. p. 160.

The Florentines now sent Jacopo di Piero Guicciardini, the historian's brother, to Ferrara in the name of the Ten, to summon Ercole to keep his pledge, and to bring him a sum of ducats to enable him to raise a force of infantry for his personal guard as their captain-general. Varchi declares that the Duke took the money, but, in spite of his pledges, neither sent his son nor returned the ducats. Ercole wrote to Montmorency that he was ready to go in person to lead the Florentines, especially as it would be serving the King, and prayed him to implore his Majesty in his name, 'since the Florentines are so faithful and affectionate to his Most Christian Crown, and I am that humble servant of his to whom he has deigned to give one of his own blood for wife,' to aid them with his protection and with his forces, without which they could not possibly resist the superior power of their assailants.¹ There seems no doubt that the young prince earnestly desired to do what his honour bade, in spite of the danger, but that Alfonso compelled him to break his word; it was a breach of faith; but, judged by the low standard of political expediency, a deplorable necessity. In answer to the Venetians, who remonstrated with him, Alfonso pleaded that he needed all his resources to defend his own states from the Pope.² Less excusable, however, was his conduct a little later when, at the bidding of Emperor and Pope, he recalled his ambassador from Florence, gave artillery to the papal officers, and sent two hundred 'wasters' to the imperial army during the siege. 'I say,' writes the great historian of Florence, 'that the Florentines were betrayed by the Duke of Ferrara and not by his son, because, apart from the fact that the Duke and not the son (who was a youth) had conducted all the negotiations of the *condotta*, Don Ercole, according to what was heard, showed that he took it very ill, and, encouraged thereto by a right faithful and valiant gentleman of his, named Messer Francesco Villa, was on the point of escaping secretly from Ferrara and going off to Florence; which afterwards, either through fear or through reverence for his father, he did not dare to carry out. Wherefore, if he should not be

¹ Letter of August 8, 1529. Molini, Document 298.

² Sanudo, li. col. 220. The Venetians approved his prudence.



DUKE ALFONSO I OF FERRARA

*By Lasso or Battista Lasso
(Palazzo Gallery, Modena)*

praised, he may at least be excused.¹ His place was taken by the Judas of the sixteenth century, Malatesta Baglioni, with the result that all the world knows. In the meantime, while Florence carried on her prolonged and heroic death-struggle against the united powers of the Pope and the Emperor, Alfonso saved his own states by the less noble, if more efficacious, means of the usual Estensian diplomacy.

Hardly had the peace of Cambrai been published when the Emperor, in the same month of August, embarking at Barcelona in the galleys of Andrea Doria, arrived in Italy. It was as no mere foreign invader or conqueror that the still youthful arbiter of the destinies of the world came; but consciously, as the successor of Caesar and Augustus, to take the imperial crown, to settle the state of Italy—probably in all sincerity as a prelude to the establishment of universal peace in Christendom and the overthrow of the power of the Turk.² The poetic Italian idealism of the *De Monarchia* was to be rendered into matter-of-fact, not to say sordid, Austrian-Spanish prose.

At Genoa, where the Emperor arrived on August 12, ambassadors from Florence and Ferrara waited upon him. The former he coldly bade submit to the Pope; the latter, who was Marco Pio, he received kindly, but asked if he had a commission to treat for an agreement with the Pope, and, hearing that he had not, sent him back unheard to the Duke. He was not the King of France, he said, but intended to keep faith with his allies.³ Hearing this, Alfonso strengthened the fortifications of Ferrara, sent reinforcements to the garrisons of Modena, Reggio and Carpi. In the meanwhile, on September 3, he sent back Marco Pio to the Emperor (who was now at Piacenza), together with Matteo Casella, an able lawyer and one of his most trusted counsellors, with full powers to treat. His original instructions and mandate to the two have been preserved in the Archives of the Vatican, and it is a curious enough document to be worth quoting in full:—

‘Lord Marco and Messer Matteo,—When you shall have

¹ Varchi, vol. ii. pp. 24, 25.

² The whole of this imperial visit to Italy is graphically described by a contemporary and eye-witness (who was probably one of the Gonzaga family) in the *Cronaca del Soggiorno di Carlo V. in Italia* (edited by G. Romano, Milan, 1892).

³ Sanudo, li. coll. 431, 464; Varchi, ii. p. 9.

come into the presence of the Caesarian Majesty, to whom I send you as my orators, you have first to kiss his imperial hands for me and humbly commend me to him; and then to say that I thank his Highness without end for the benign audience that he has deigned to grant to you, Lord Marco, when, in these days past, you went to do him reverence and offer service in my name. Then add that, to obey what his Majesty gave you to understand was his will, I have sent the two of you with an ample mandate to be able to treat and act with his Highness in as much as shall be necessary for me; and that I beseech him, with all humility, that, if not for my most devoted service and supreme obedience towards him, at least for the reverence of God and for the singular goodness and justice of his Caesarian Majesty, he may deign to have me in his protection, and not suffer that another should avail himself of the authority and favour of his imperial Majesty to do me wrong. And, if my evil fate has not let me prove myself as worthy and deserving of his good grace as was always my desire, I beseech his benign Highness to deign in this matter not to look so much upon me as upon himself, and what befits his own good nature and the power that God has given him upon the earth.

‘And because I expect that the principal and most important point upon which you will be urged to treat is the case of Modena, Reggio, and Rubiera, which the Pope demands, I do not give you any other instruction in writing, concerning the many good and truthful rights that I have in them, whereas his Holiness and the Church have none; for both of you, and especially you, Messer Matteo, are fully informed on the subject. But I only remind you that, while proceeding and behaving always with all possible submission and humility, you have in this matter to beseech the said Caesarian Majesty that he may deign, like the living Law and defender of Justice that he is, to look to it whether right or passion is moving the Pope against me; and that, as it is to be believed that his Majesty has never had the intention of promising a thing that is contrary to justice, he may deign to consider if it is just that the Pope should demand and want those towns, which my House has possessed for centuries and held with lawful title from his imperial Crown, from which I also

hold them, without the Apostolic See having ever possessed them, save when it has taken them from me by force—concerning which you will be able to dilate according to the circumstances. And if (as I think) you are put off to treat with the most reverend Grand Chancellor,¹ and unfitting and unreasonable propositions are made to you, insist upon speaking again to the Emperor, and plead my rights. Tell his Caesarian Majesty that I have commissioned you to assure him that I am ready to do with myself, and with all I have, exactly what shall be his Highness's good pleasure; because I trust and hold for most certain that he, as a most just prince, will not wish that, contrary to justice, so ancient a House should be ruined, which has been so much benefited and honoured by so many predecessors of his Caesarian Majesty, and lastly by himself, and of which he will always be able to make use, even as he and his predecessors have made use many other times. For the rest, I refer me to what I have told you and arranged by word of mouth, because of the confidence that I have in your prudence. Keep well.'²

In spite of less noble qualities and many ignoble deeds, the Emperor feared God, and justice was not an empty word to him. He received the ambassadors graciously and expressed a wish to confer with the Duke in person. When, at the end of October, he prepared to go by way of Mantua to meet the Pope at Bologna, Marco Pio and Casella invited him, in Alfonso's name, to take the shorter route by Reggio and Modena, himself and all the Court to be the Duke's guests. With a splendid escort, Alfonso hastened to meet the Emperor at the Reggian frontier, threw himself upon his mercy and appealed to his justice, offering him the keys of the cities that Clement claimed, in a silver basin. Charles greeted him kindly, reassured him, and bade him take back the keys as they were in good keeping. First at Reggio and then at Modena, Alfonso entertained his formidable guest in the most magnificent fashion, 'that verily showed the greatness and splendour of Italy in a Duke.'³ They had much secret con-

¹ Cardinal Arboreo da Gattinara.

² Original document, dated Ferrara, September 3, 1529, and signed 'Bonaventura' (Pistofilo). *Archivio Vaticano*, xlvii. 2.

³ Sanudo, lii. col. 275.

versation together at both cities; and the Duke not only convinced the Emperor of the justice of his claims, but also won over his principal advisers to his side. The result was that, though Clement still sternly refused to allow his contumacious vassal to come to Bologna, Alfonso, when he brought Caesar to the Bolognese frontier, on November 3, could return to Ferrara with the satisfactory conviction that the day was practically won.

On the afternoon of November 5, the Emperor made his solemn entry into Bologna, where the Pope awaited him. Enormous preparations had been made by his Holiness and the Bolognese 'to make the entry of his Majesty into Bologna the most honourable possible for such and so great an Emperor, and to do a thing never, perchance, seen in Christendom.'¹ There were the usual sumptuous decorations and hangings, arches of triumph and the like; but the afternoon was dark and misty, and the rain fell at intervals. All round the great piazza were Latin inscriptions that hailed the concord of Pope and Emperor, suggesting a comparison between the latter and Constantine or Charlemagne. In front of San Petronio, high above the piazza so that all might witness the tremendous spectacle, a great platform had been erected, covered with silk and cloth of gold, decorated with the papal and imperial arms; here the Pope in full pontifical robes sat enthroned, surrounded by the Cardinals and his ecclesiastical Court, awaiting Caesar's coming; while, at the bidding of his Holiness, the gentlemen and people of Bologna had gone to meet him at the gate.

There was little of the pageantry of the Italian Renaissance left in this procession that passed through the streets of Bologna that dull November afternoon; but it was exclusively a grim military triumph. At its passage the cheering of the people, the musical discord of bells and instruments, were drowned in the sonorous roll of the Austrian and Spanish drums 'that thundered up to heaven.' The Italian element was no more than a captive dragged to grace Caesar's triumphal march. First came light horse with lances; artillery with the 'wasters'; landsknechts on foot with pikes and halberds; the dreaded Spanish infantry, pikemen and arquebusiers, march-

¹ *Cronaca del Soggiorno*, p. 113.

ing five by five, until all the narrow streets seemed a waving storm of banners above their heads. In the midst of them was Antonio de Leyva, carried aloft on a chair covered with green velvet, full still in his aspect of strength and fierceness though crippled by disease. After him came Italian arquebusiers, 'the flower of Italy,' with banners displayed and rolling drums, 'which was a fearful thing.' Antonio de Leyva occupied the piazza, reviewed his troops before the Pope, and ordered all the artillery and arquebuses to be discharged, in deafening prelude to Caesar's coming.

All the bells clashed out from church and palace as the Emperor drew near. He was preceded by Italian and Albanian light horsemen, superbly equipped men-at-arms and archers of Burgundy, all mounted. After these came the Emperor's gentlemen and pages; the great Flemish and Spanish nobles. Charles himself appeared under a baldacchino of silver brocade carried by the twelve first knights of Bologna; he was armed in white and gold, save the head, upon which he had a black and gold cap with a white plume, and was mounted upon his favourite grey Spanish horse, 'Virgilius.' The crown and sword and purse were borne before him, and on either side were attendants with vases full of gold and silver, which he scattered to the people. There were very few Italian nobles in his train; only the young Marquis Bonifazio of Monferrato, Count Alessandro Gonzaga of Novellara, and the great Andrea Doria. 'There was Andrea Doria,' wrote a Venetian eyewitness, 'without arms, dressed in black cloth and belted, without a cloak; an old man, tall, upright, and wary, with a long, white, forked beard, and with a vivacity that seems always ready to take action; he is in all the counsels of his Majesty.'

Arrived in the piazza, the Emperor dismounted with his chief nobles, and ascended the platform. Here the solemn meeting of the successors of Peter and Caesar, the spiritual and temporal rulers of the world, took place. Nothing could exceed the reverent humility with which Charles approached to kiss Clement's feet. Perhaps he really felt it; it was at least for the universal peace of Christendom and the triumph of the Catholic Faith, as much as for his own personal advantage, that he had come. And the strong conqueror could afford

to be reverential in his bearing. Anyway, it is one of the great scenes of history. 'This spectacle, Madonna mia,' wrote the Marchesana Isabella to Renée, 'has seemed to me so beautiful that I confess that, for my part, I have never seen such another, nor do I think to see one again in my days; and if I had attempted to describe all the details to your Excellence, I should have given you too much to read. It remains for us to pray to God that, from the conference for which these two great Lords have come together, there may follow those good results that are desired by all, for the quiet and universal peace of Christendom.'¹

At Bologna, the diplomatists had a busy time for the next two months in arranging the terms of a general Italian peace—Florence, of course, being relentlessly excluded both by Pope and Emperor. The chief problems were to induce Venice to come to an agreement with the Emperor and the King of Hungary, to reconcile the Duke of Milan with the Emperor, to devise a compromise between the Duke of Ferrara and the Pope.

Among those who waited upon the Emperor was a pathetic survival of a past epoch of Italian history. The ex-Queen Isabella, widow of Frederick, the last Aragonese sovereign of Naples, had for some years lived under Alfonso's protection in the palace near San Francesco (the present Palazzo Pareschi) at Ferrara, with her daughters, Giulia and Maria; while her son, the Duke of Calabria, lived similarly under the protection of Spain at Barcelona. Poor and miserable, the Queen had turned to religion for consolation; but her daughters, for whom she was unable to find husbands and whose unhappy youth was passing into a still more empty spinsterhood, seem to have found two lovers of lowly rank to take pity upon their loneliness. When Alfonso discovered this, he wrote to inform their brother, and offered to hush up the scandal by having the two young men strangled and the unhappy princesses shut up in two separate convents. The Duke of Calabria, however, does not seem to have thought such severe measures neces-

¹ The whole triumph and meeting is vividly described in the *Cronaca del Soggiorno*, pp. 116-127; in Sanudo, lii. coll. 275-280 (*copia di una lettera da Bologna*); and by Isabella in her letter to the Duchess Renée, dated Bologna, November 5, in D'Arco, *Notizie di Isabella d'Este Gonzaga*, Document 86.

sary.¹ Before the Emperor left Barcelona, he implored his Majesty to take his mother and sisters under his protection. Isabella, with her two daughters, came over from Ferrara to Bologna early in November. The ex-Queen was carried into the Emperor's presence in a litter, attended by her daughters, and followed by a number of Neapolitan exiles. Charles received her very kindly, and promised to befriend her.

A few days later, the Marchese Federigo Gonzaga of Mantua came to Bologna, ostensibly to give advice to Pope and Emperor about sending the imperial army against Florence, in reality to intrigue for the possession of the ducal crown of Milan, for which he had been in treaty with the two supreme potentates through his ambassador, Giovanni Battista Malatesta. His claims were warmly supported by Antonio de Leyva (who hated Francesco Sforza), by Andrea Doria, and by the Bishop of Vaison; but opposed by the Venetians, who were loyally protecting their Milanese ally, and who gained the Pope over to their side. At the instance of the latter, the Emperor granted a safe-conduct to Sforza, who had been put under the ban of the Empire as a traitor; and he came privately to Bologna on November 23 (carried in a litter, for he was completely broken down in health and could hardly stand), to throw himself on the Emperor's mercy. At this, Gonzaga left Bologna in a high state of indignation, declaring that the Pope had betrayed him. Antonio de Leyva, on December 7, assured Malatesta that the Emperor would never have been brought to consent that Francesco Sforza should remain Duke of Milan, 'had it not been for his confessor, who had been corrupted by the Pope by the promise of the red

¹ Cappelli, pp. lxvi., lxvii. Several piteous letters from the ex-Queen have been preserved. In one, addressed to the General of the Olivetani, dated Ferrara, June 29, 1511 (P. M. Oraffi, *Vita del B. Bernardo Tolomei*, Venice, 1650, pp. 239, 240), she expresses profound gratitude to the Order for the gift of an allowance of three hundred ducats a year, in commemoration of the great benefits it has received from the House of Aragon in the past. In another, unpublished (British Museum, Bibl. Cotton, Vesp. F. iii.), dated Ferrara, March 22, 1515, signed *Infelicissima Isabella de Aragonia*, she implores the widowed Mary Tudor to help her sons, Ferrante and Alfonso: 'I and my children, expelled from our country and kingdom, even as miserable mendicants are wandering about Europe in wretchedness with no certain home.'

hat.¹ But, before he left Bologna, Andrea Doria had proposed that Federigo should marry Donna Giulia of Aragon, the younger of the two disinherited Neapolitan princesses, receiving with her a dowry and, perhaps, the city of Cremona from the Emperor.

In the meanwhile—with the solitary exception of Florence, to which the Emperor was ill-disposed because of its traditional adherence to the side of France, and which the Pope was inflexibly bent upon reconquering for the Medici—the deserted late Italian allies of the Most Christian King found that Caesar was disposed to be fair and gracious. He concluded an honourable treaty with the Venetian Republic, which surrendered to him the places it still held in the kingdom of Naples and gave back Ravenna and Cervia to the Pope. At the intercession of the Venetians, he consented to pardon Francesco Sforza and to reinvest him with the duchy of Milan. At the midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, which the Pope sang, the Duke held his Holiness's train, and the Emperor sang the Gospel. On the first day of the new year, 1530, the peace between the Pope, the Emperor, and practically all the States of Italy, excepting Florence, was solemnly published.

In the peace there was a special clause to the effect that the Duke of Ferrara should be regarded as included and comprehended, if he came to an agreement with the Pope and the Emperor. To the Venetian Senate, Gasparo Contarini had accurately reported the feeling of his two suzerains towards Alfonso. 'In my opinion,' he said, 'his Holiness has the worst disposition towards the Duke of Ferrara; because, besides his claim to his State and to Modena and Reggio, it seemed to his Holiness that the taking and ruin of Rome was chiefly caused by that Duke, seeing that, but for the passage and the supplies that Monseigneur de Bourbon had from him, that army would not have been able to pass to the sack of Rome.' Caesar, on the other hand, had been entirely disposed

¹ For the whole of this excessively mean Mantuan intrigue, cf. Davari, *Federico Gonzaga e la Famiglia Paleologa*, pp. 42, 43, and Documents 7-10; *Cronaca del Soggiorno*, pp. 133-142. The Emperor's confessor was the Dominican, Garcia de Loaysa, Bishop of Osma, who was made a cardinal in March, 1530.

in Alfonso's favour by the confidence shown in him, when the Duke 'gave into his hands the cities of Modena and Reggio, and, as it were, himself.'¹ Clement persisted in refusing to hear of any compromise as regarded Reggio and Modena and Rubiera, saying that, if he gave up these cities, Parma and Piacenza would be completely cut off from the States of the Church; and he called upon the Emperor to carry out the agreement made at Barcelona.

Ostensibly, Charles was professing readiness to compel Don Alfonso to submit to the Pope, but, in reality, he was offended at the latter's persistence, and only looking for a way to evade his pledge. Alfonso declared that he was ready to come to any terms that the Emperor thought fitting, provided that his dominions were not diminished; he continued to appeal to Caesar's sense of justice, and said plainly that, if the worst came to the worst, he would know how to defend his rights. 'His Majesty,' wrote Malatesta to the Marquis of Mantua, on January 11, 'shows that he is exceedingly distressed at the obstinacy of the Pope against the Duke, and promises that he will do all he can to remove his Holiness from this obstinacy, and to induce him to agree to an honourable compromise. In fact, I am more and more convinced that the Duke of Ferrara has corrupted all the counsellors of the Emperor, and perhaps himself too.' 'The Duke,' he wrote again, 'uses all possible submission towards the Caesarian Majesty, and says that, as to the State of Carpi which he holds, he will right willingly surrender it to his Majesty, as he knows well that he is holding it unlawfully. But, as to the other things which the Pope claims, he declares that he holds them most justly.'²

On the Feast of St. Matthias, February 24, 1530, came what was perhaps the most magnificent and most significant pageant of the sixteenth century—the coronation of the Emperor by the Pope in San Petronio at Bologna. In spite of an expressed desire on the part of the Emperor to see him there, Clement obstinately refused to allow the Duke of Ferrara to attend the ceremony. But, the coronation being

¹ Alberi, II. iii., pp. 267, 271.

² Romano, notes to *Cronaca del Soggiorno*, pp. 181, 182. Cf. Pistofilo, cap. xciii.; Sanudo, lii. col. 464.

over, the Emperor, who was resolved to have the entire Italian question settled before returning to Germany, induced the Pope to consent to Alfonso coming to Bologna under a safe-conduct, that he might personally come to some agreement. The King of France had also written on his behalf, and the Duchess Beatrice of Savoy had pleaded his cause in person with both Pope and Emperor.

Accompanied by the Venetian ambassador, Marcantonio Venier, attended by four hundred of the chief gentlemen of Ferrara and three hundred horsemen, Alfonso arrived at Bologna on the evening of March 7. The next day in state, attended by his gentlemen and a guard of landsknechts, he went 'to kiss the feet of the Holiness of our Lord and the hand of the Emperor.' Clement received him standing at one of the windows of the great Bolognese Palazzo del Comune, accepted his homage with a good grace, and imparted to him his apostolic benediction. After a fortnight's prolonged discussion, proposals and counter-proposals, they arrived at a compromise by which all the questions at issue between Alfonso and the Holy See, including that of the duchy of Ferrara which Clement claimed as a lapsed fief, were committed to the Emperor for arbitration—though Alfonso frankly told his Majesty that he would not obey an adverse sentence as far as Ferrara itself was concerned. Judgment was to be delivered within six months. In the meanwhile, Modena was to be given into the hands of the Emperor in deposit, but to be restored to the Duke if sentence were not pronounced within the specified time.

'According to what I have heard from one who was present,' wrote Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, 'the Pope and the Emperor being together, the Lord Duke was called into the chamber of his Holiness; and, in presence of the most reverend Cibo, Salviati, and the Cardinal who was his Majesty's confessor, and of the Caesarian counsellors, one of the Emperor's secretaries read an instrument, the sum of which in substance is that our Lord and the Duke refer all these differences to the Emperor, who is to decide within six months what shall seem to him to be just and fitting, with the power of defining the said differences both in right and in fact. During these six months the Lord Duke deposits

the city of Modena, before ten days pass, into the hands of his Majesty, who now pledges himself by letter to his Excellence that, if, after the six months have passed, the matter, for whatever reason, is not decided, the said city shall at once return and be given to the Lord Duke. Both parties promise not to offend each other, directly or indirectly, giving security for three hundred thousand scudi each; with certain other conditions of less importance. After it had been read, the Pope prayed the Emperor to decide the cause quickly; and the Duke, falling upon his knees, prayed the same of his Majesty, and afterwards professed his devotion to his Holiness with many loving words; to which our Lord made answer with others even more loving, speaking of the friendship that had always existed between his House and that of Este, and excusing himself, since he had succeeded Leo and Julius and had found things as he found them, for not having been able not to do what he had done, with other kind words. The Emperor rose up and was accompanied to his apartments by the Duke, after which his Excellence returned again to take leave of his Holiness, and other sweet words passed between them, which gives cause for hope that they will persevere in good concord.¹

This was on March 21. The next day Charles left Bologna, accompanied by Alfonso by way of Modena and Correggio to Mantua. At Modena, which they passed through on the 23rd, a popular ovation had been zealously prepared, under heavy penalties, by the Duke's orders.² Ercole and Ippolito waited upon the Emperor at Mantua, and received the usual benign welcome. A Spanish governor, Don Pedro Zappata de Cardenas, with an imperial garrison, arrived at Modena on Easter Sunday, April 17, and took possession of the city in the Emperor's name; Jacomo Alvarotti, the ducal governor, leaving on the 19th. The imperial standard was hoisted over the two towers of the Castello, and the Emperor's arms were put up over the gates, the Duomo, and the customhouse.³

¹ Letter to Paolo Porto, dated Bologna, March 22, 1530. Molini, Document 332.

² Cf. Campori, *Carlo V. in Modena* (*Archivio Storico Italiano*, series I., Appendix, vol. vi.), p. 147.

³ T. de' Bianchi, iii. pp. 39-43. 'The said Lord Governor wished to see my Chronicle; so I brought it to him in the Castello, that part about the

The question of Carpi was solved by Charles selling it to Alfonso, in spite of the Pope's efforts to get it restored to Alberto Pio. After raising Federigo Gonzaga to the dignity of Duke of Mantua, in April, Charles returned to Germany. It may, at least, be said that he had done more than any previous wearer of the imperial crown to heal the wounds of Italy; but the horrors of the Sack of Rome remained a hideous, ineffaceable memory; and the wolves and vultures of war were still gathered round the white body of Florence, the republican victim for the peace of the nation.

We may, perhaps, ascribe a part of the Emperor's leniency towards Alfonso to the fact that his army was already fully occupied in the siege of Florence—a fact of which the Duke knew how to take full advantage. When the beleaguered city at length surrendered in August, 1530, Alfonso had to be more circumspect, and to agree to the imperial demand of a prolongation of the six months for the decision, in the course of which witnesses were being examined in Rome, Ravenna, and Modena. The able diplomacy of Matteo Casella was more than a match for the papal agents at the imperial Court. On December 21, 1530, Charles gave his decision at Cologne; but, although the result was known to be practically in favour of the Duke of Ferrara, the publication was postponed for four months in deference to the Pope. When at Rome the Caesarian ambassador pressed his Holiness to agree to leave Modena and Reggio to Alfonso for a financial consideration, Clement refused and persisted in offering Ravenna and Cervia instead—the acceptance of which (as he perfectly well knew) would have completely estranged the Duke from his Venetian allies.

Alfonso was a frequent visitor to Venice at this time, partly for political purposes, partly to take recreation. He had expressly stipulated with the Senate that, on these occasions, he should not be given a public reception, but left at liberty to go about like a private citizen and keep company with his numerous friends among the Venetian nobility.¹

time when Messer Vitfurst was in Modena as lieutenant of the Majesty of the Emperor, and read it in part to his Lordship, in the presence of Messer Paolo da Coreza and the Captain Livizan' (*Ibid.*, p. 53).

¹ Pistofilo, cap. xeviii.

Ariosto (who had, perhaps, accompanied him to meet the Emperor at Modena and afterwards to Bologna) was in constant attendance on him at Venice. 'The Duke,' wrote Marcantonio Venier to the Senate, 'is now fifty-four years old, healthy in his body. He has three sons: Don Ercole, who is twenty-three years old, who delights in literature and affairs of State; Don Ippolito, Archbishop of Milan, twenty-one years old; and Don Francesco, fourteen years old, who delights in arms and things of war, and, if he lives, will be a great man in the military art. All his sons understand politics. The Duke takes counsel with them, and leaves the labour of government to Don Ercole.'¹ In May, 1530, after Caesar's departure, Alfonso went incognito to Venice, with Don Ippolito and twenty followers, to express his great gratitude to the Republic; his own ancestral palace, the 'Casa del Marchese' (afterwards the Fondaco de' Turchi, now the Museo Civico), which had been confiscated during the struggle with Julius II., being still in the hands of the papal legate, he lodged in Cà Foscari.²

In the following October, Alfonso was in Venice again, and a chance reference in a letter from Alessandra Strozzi, to one of her late husband's kinsmen in Padua, shows that Ariosto was with him. Alfonso had gone to meet his nephew, the restored Duke of Milan, who, broken down in soul and body, 'very melancholy, hardly able to use his hands, and walking with difficulty,' with all his train in mourning for the death of his brother, the ex-Duke Massimiliano, received a state reception in Venice on October 11. Alfonso, as usual, came in his galley, 'familiarily.' This time he lodged at a house he had taken at Murano, near the glass-works, in which he took the keenest interest and delight. We hear of him 'in Cà Foscari with Ser Catarin Zeno di Ser Piero, his very great friend,' watching the races on the Grand Canal, being present at a state ball in the Doge's palace, and witnessing with his attendants a great sham fight, *bellum navale*, on the Lagoons, from the balcony of the Sala del Gran Consiglio.³ With his

¹ Sanudo, liii. col. 195.

² *Ibid.*, coll. 231, 233, 256.

³ Sanudo, liv. coll. 38, 39, 65-81; letter from Alessandra Strozzi to Gian Francesco Strozzi at Padua, January 22, 1531 (Cappelli, p. 324). Alfonso arrived at Venice on October 11, and left on October 23.

usual tendency to sow tares, Pope Clement suggested to the French King that Alfonso and the Duke of Milan had met together in this way in order to plot against his Majesty ; but Francis wisely declined to believe it.¹ Nevertheless, in the following July, 1531, when the negotiations were in progress for the marriage of the Pope's kinswoman, Caterina de' Medici, with Henry of Orleans, Alfonso deemed it wiser not to allow Don Ercole to accept an invitation from the King to go to France.²

At length on April 21, 1531, at Ghent, the Emperor published his sentence (under the previous date of December 21). Within two months of publication, Alfonso, either in person or by his procurators, was to crave to be received into the grace of the Pope and of the Apostolic See ; he and his heirs, under pain of deprivation of the duchy of Ferrara, were to pay an annual tribute to the Pope of seven thousand golden ducats on the vigil of the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, and in addition a sum of one hundred thousand ducats, half on receiving the investiture and half at the end of a year, as 'caution money,' until which time Modena was to remain sequestered. The Pope, in return, was to grant the investiture of the duchy of Ferrara to Alfonso for himself and his heirs. Modena, Reggio, Rubiera, and Cottignola were to be left to Alfonso in undisputed possession.

When the news of the publication of the imperial decision reached Ferrara, Alfonso at once hastened to Belriguardo to inform Renée, who was so delighted that she presented the girdle of St. François de Paule, which she had brought with her from France, to the convent of the Minims, and wrote a little note of thanks to the Emperor with her own hand in French.³

The decision was universally regarded as a just compromise, and Charles expressed a hope that it would put a complete end to all misunderstanding between Ferrara and the Holy See. To Clement's protests, he answered that he had taken the advice of his Council and of all who understood the legal

¹ Sanudo, liv. coll. 164, 165.

² Fontana, i. pp. 160, 161. In May, 1533, Ercole again declined a similar royal invitation (*Ibid.*, p. 180).

³ Molini, Document 393.

aspect of the case, and that he could do no more, unless the Pope produced new reasons. Alfonso promptly sent ambassadors to Rome to crave the Pope's pardon. On June 28, his procurator, Jacomo Alvarotti, appeared at the Vatican before Vespers, to announce that the Duke was prepared to carry out his part of the sentence, to pay down the first instalment of the money (fifty-seven thousand ducats), and pray his Holiness to carry out his part. Clement listened to him quietly; but, pleading the great importance of the matter, 'not only because of the interests of his own person and of the Apostolic See, but also for the peace and quiet of Italy, for which, together with the Caesarian Majesty, he has laboured so much,' declared that he must consider his position with more deliberation, and would give no immediate answer. But he accepted the money under protest, allowing it to be paid into the Apostolic Treasury as a sort of deposit, to be refunded if there should be no further agreement.¹

In the latter part of August of this year, 1531, Alfonso went to take the baths of Abano, in the Paduan district, accompanied as usual by Ariosto. At the baths, the poet was taken ill with fever. His friend, Gasparo degli Obizzi, took him to Padua where he had many friends (including Bembo, with whom he was particularly anxious to confer about the revision of the *Orlando*, as we shall see), and where his son, Virginio, was now a student at the University. But he had hardly recovered when he was compelled, unwillingly, to accompany the Duke to Venice.

'As to your complaint,' we find him writing a little later in Alessandra's name to Gian Francesco Strozzi, 'that the writer of this letter was ill at Padua and you knew nothing of it, your Lordship must know that, when the first fever came upon him at the baths, it chanced that the Cavaliere degli Obizzi was there, and besought him to come to Padua, to stay with him until he was restored to health; and he wrought upon him so much that he gave up coming to Ferrara, as he had at first intended, and went to Padua, where he had another fever, which was a tertian. And while he was planning, as soon as

¹ Sanudo, liv. coll. 288, 329, 430, 435-438, 495-497; Pistofilo, cap. xcvi. ; Fontana, i. Document 40.

he was convalescent, to stay some days in Padua, where he would have visited your Lordship and his other friends, the Lord Duke arrived and took him with him to Venice, although he was still weak and not completely cured; so that he lacked time to do what was his duty. Your Lordship must therefore excuse him. If another time he should chance to come to those parts, he will make amends for his seeming negligence.'¹

They reached Venice on September 1, staying in the house that Alfonso rented at Murano. The Duke amused himself by having glass vessels made *a suo modo* (an old hobby of his), but he was busied in the more serious task of getting securities for the money he had to pay the Pope and for the redemption of Modena. In this he was entirely successful. But his stay was cut short by the news that, as a sequel to Clement's hostile reception of the imperial award, Spanish and other mercenaries were being got together secretly in Romagna and Tuscany, with the intention of taking advantage of the simultaneous absence of Alfonso and Ercole (the latter was at Carpi) to surprise Ferrara in the name of the Pope. The Duke and his company left Venice on September 9. Arrived at Ferrara, he promptly strengthened the defences of the chief towns of the duchy, and brought a strong force of arquebusiers into the city itself. The affair had no sequel. A report was spread that it had only been a wild design of Leonello Pio to recover Carpi; but Pistofilo declares that this was a mere cloak to shield the Pope's complicity.²

In the latter part of the summer, a Spanish force (practically the remains of the imperial army that had besieged Florence) under the Marchese del Vasto moved up from the territory of the Church, passed through the Modenese, and was distributed in the territory of the imperial feudataries, at Correggio, Mirandola, Concordia, Scandiano. They were some fifteen thousand men, with two thousand women, and an abundance of dogs,

¹ Letter dated Ferrara, October 26, 1531. Cappelli, p. 326. This Gian Francesco Strozzi was the son of Carlo Strozzi, who had fought at Fornovo as a Venetian condottiere, and Lucia Capra of Vicenza; he was the great-grandson of the famous Palla Strozzi, the opponent and victim of the Medici, who had died in exile at Padua.

² Sanudo, liv. coll. 572-581, 597; Pistofilo, cap. xcvi. ; T. de' Bianchi, iii. pp. 302, 303.

hawks, and the like, which created a very unfavourable impression when they passed through Modena. The Marquis set his headquarters at Correggio, while his troops did the utmost damage to the country round, penetrating into the Modenese district, demanding supplies for which they paid as they chose. Things grew more intolerable during Vasto's absence at Naples, whither he had gone to visit his wife, who had just borne him a son. There was even a rumour that the more audacious of his soldiery intended to make a prisoner of Ercole d'Este, who was coming from Carpi to Correggio, and hand him over to the Pope. The Lord of Correggio, Gian Francesco, died on September 10—of sheer grief and vexation, it was said, at seeing the ruin of his country and people at the hands of the soldiers.¹

The Marquis returned to Correggio at the beginning of October, and to him Alfonso sent Ariosto. This was Messer Lodovico's last diplomatic mission, and apparently had for object the protection of the Modenese from the soldiery, or at least to obtain some alleviation of the sufferings of the Duke's subjects. He found the imperial general in the palace of the deceased Lord of Correggio, where Veronica Gambara (widow of Gian Francesco's cousin Giberto)—‘so dear to Apollo and the Muses,’ as Messer Lodovico sang of her—seems now to have held sway. Not only did Ariosto obtain what he demanded on his Duke's behalf, but he found himself the object of a personal ovation. ‘He was most dear to the Marchese del Vasto and to the best fellowship that he had with him,’ writes Pigna, ‘and had favours and gifts of him without having expected anything of the kind.’ Perhaps, he read certain select cantos of the new edition that he was preparing of his *Orlando* to the Marquis and his company—doubtless those in which the heroes of the House of Avalos appear in the light of chivalry that surely never was on sixteenth century Italy, with that melodious stanza at the poem's close that glows with the beauty and virtue of Anna of Aragon, her sister Giovanna, and Vittoria Colonna. At least Vasto's gifts were on a princely scale.

‘Yesterday evening,’ writes Alessandra to Gian Francesco

¹ T. de' Bianchi, iii. pp. 272 *et seq.*, 325-328.

Strozzi, soon after the poet's return to Ferrara, 'I received a letter of your Lordship's of the first of the month, and have read what you write me by it, especially about the magnificent Ariosto. Do not be surprised that I have not answered you, as I was waiting to write you a great piece of news about his Lordship, which I tell you now. The magnificent Ariosto has been some days with the Excellence of the illustrious Lord Marchese del Vasto, who at his departure has given him an annuity of one hundred ducats for himself and his heirs, and also a lapis lazuli, most beautiful, set in gold with a chain of gold and a gold Crucifix. In sooth, it is a most beauteous thing to see, so that at present his Lordship is here in Ferrara, in good health and well content at this gift that the Lord Marquis has given him.'¹

In the meanwhile, Duke Alfonso had had no difficulty in obtaining security in Venice for the money he needed, and, indeed, throughout the whole crisis he had been loyally supported by the most serene Republic. Satisfied with this, the Emperor at once ordered that Modena should be restored to the Duke, and, on October 12, Don Pedro Zappata (who had won golden opinions from the Modenese during his rule) gave over the city to the Ferrarese representative, Enea Pio, who came as governor. Young men went through the streets shouting 'Alfonso, Alfonso'; but the Duke ordered that there should be no public rejoicings, but that a solemn Mass of the Holy Spirit should be sung in the Duomo and alms given to the poor.² To the Doge of Venice he wrote: 'Because I have obtained the restitution of Modena by means of the favour and assistance that has been lent me by that most excellent Dominion and by those magnificent gentlemen who have been my sureties, I thank your Serenity and that most illustrious

¹ Letter of November 16, 1531, Cappelli, p. 327. The document of Vasto's donation to Ariosto, dated at Correggio, October 18, 1531, is in Tiraboschi and Baruffaldi. I take it that this embassy of Ariosto's to Vasto is what T. de' Bianchi mentions, iii. p. 357, though he does not name the gentleman whom the Duke sent. The poet may possibly have just missed Titian on this occasion. 'I also want to have Titian here,' wrote the Marchese del Vasto from Correggio, on November 11, to Pietro Aretino; 'and, if you can manage to make him come, I shall be delighted, and you can freely assure him that he will not spend his steps in vain' (*Lettere scritte al Signor Pietro Aretino*, vol. i., Venice, 1552, p. 109).

² T. de' Bianchi, iii. pp. 336-340. Enea Pio proved a hard and oppressive governor, and soon earned bitter hatred from the Modenese.

Signoria as cordially as I can, and assure you that I shall ever retain the most grateful memory of the paternal demonstration and most friendly action that you have deigned to do for my benefit.'¹

Alfonso had been long ago promised the restitution of the 'Casa del Marchese' at Venice. At the end of this October, the papal legate died. As soon as his body was removed and the household had left, the Ferrarese ambassador entered the palace and took possession in the Duke's name. The Venetian Government offered no objection; but the Pope showed 'infinite indignation,' declaring that the Republic was making more account of the Duke of Ferrara than of himself.²

Alfonso could afford to take his triumph quietly. For the rest of his reign, secure in the support of the Emperor and the friendship of Venice, he had little to fear from the Pope's scarcely disguised hostility. He would be able to leave to his sons the whole dominions of the three duchies as he had received them from his own father, and with the new gem of the principality of Carpi added to the ducal coronet of the House of Este.

Alberto Pio had not lived to see the complete triumph of his enemy. He had died at Paris in poverty and neglect, on January 8, 1531; his last months were employed in composing his intended refutation of the doctrines of Erasmus. The chronicler of Modena has given forcible expression to the popular opinion in Italy of Alberto's character:—

'This lord professed great learning, but too much knowledge has done him more injury than it has given him pleasure. He has been the cause of the ruin of Italy by his using his wisdom to persuade his princes to war and not to peace, always in order to ruin the Duke of Ferrara; at the end, he has been ruined himself in possessions, in honour, and perchance in his soul—for God, who is just, will take vengeance for so many poor souls that have been slain in the wars of Italy, and so many maidens that have been undone in the State of Milan and through all Lombardy, at Rome during the Sack, and lastly at Florence. The conclusion is that all the

¹ Letter dated Ferrara, October 14, 1531. Sanudo, *lv. coll.* 67, 68.

² Sanudo, *lv. coll.* 122, 141, 212; Pistofilo, *cap. c.*

wise who lose are reputed foolish, and all those who win and gain are reputed wiser than he. Dying at the present time, he has died early ; but, if it had pleased God, better were it had he died twenty-five years ago, for the advantage of poor Italy.’¹

Truly a hard judgment upon the piteous end of one whose youth had been so full of glorious promise. The life-story of this friend and companion of Ariosto’s early manhood is, indeed, one of the soul’s tragedies of the later Renaissance. Was it only that fate was too strong for him, or did the practice of intrigue (as men seem to have believed), the under-hand, designing strain in his character, at last so absorb his nobler, purer side as to transform the once princely scholar into a living lie? Be that as it may, Carpi itself, that strangely picturesque little red-brick city that he rebuilt and well-nigh recreated in the brief days of his glory, speaks more of Alberto to-day than of his Estensian conquerors. And in Messer Lodovico’s Latin poetry, in Aldo’s dedications, in Peruzzi’s noble portrait, something imperishable from the ruins of his better, truer self is with us still.

¹ T. de’ Bianchi, iii. pp. 202, 203. Alberto left his brother Leonello the sole heir of his ruined fortunes. In Molini (Document 386), may be read a piteous appeal from Leonello’s son, the bishop Rodolfo Pio, dated Rome, January 27, 1531, imploring the Grand Master, Montmorency, to take him under his protection with the King: ‘And since at present we cannot have back our country which we have lost, as is well known to all the world, only because we have served his Majesty (to which we were impelled only by our great desire of serving him), he should at least not refuse me, who am a churchman, those favours which, without any inconvenience to himself, he is wont to grant all day to his servants.’

CHAPTER X

THE LAST YEARS OF ARIOSTO

AN altogether brighter and more restful period in Messer Lodovico's life had opened on his return from the Garfagnana. Save for a few journeys to Venice and elsewhere in the Duke's company, and the one diplomatic mission to the Marchese del Vasto, he was left undisturbed in his beloved Ferrara. He was still one of the gentlemen of the Duke's household, presumably in receipt of his former salary, but his duties were probably little more than nominal, and mainly concerned with the altogether congenial labours of superintending the theatrical performances of the Court. Besides his old tried friends, a band of young men had gathered round him, who looked up to him as a master and drank in his poetical and artistic doctrines. First and foremost of these was the hereditary prince, Don Ercole, whose handsome presence and winning character strongly attracted the poet's affection. Pigna tells us that Ariosto had more respect for him than for almost any other prince of the day, and we learn from Virginio Ariosti that it was Don Ercole who persuaded Lodovico to turn again to poetry—the reference is, perhaps, mainly to the new and enlarged version of the *Orlando Furioso*—which he had well-nigh deserted through the worry and vexations of his prolonged lawsuit with the ducal Camera.

Another young friend of Ariosto's in these later years of his life, practically a disciple, was the Duke's nephew, the poet Ercole Bentivoglio. The son of Annibale Bentivoglio and Lucrezia d'Este, Ercole was born at Bologna in 1506, just before the expulsion of the Bentivogli from that city. Annibale and Lucrezia had been allowed to settle in Ferrara after the death of Julius II., and young Ercole entered the

service and Court of his uncle. In the siege of Florence (compelled thereto against his own will by his father), he commanded a company of papal troops—as he himself lets us know in his excellent second Satire; but his headquarters at this period of his life seem to have been the Court of Ferrara, though his later years were spent at Venice. A third friend and pupil in the poetic art (a most intimate associate, according to his own showing, but nowhere mentioned by Ariosto himself) was Giovan Battista Giraldi, known as ‘Cinthio,’ a Ferrarese born in 1504, who in 1532 held a chair at the Studio, and later on became secretary to Duke Ercole. A pedant and would-be poet, Giraldi is best known to-day by virtue of his book of *novelle* (one of which was to give Shakespeare the theme of his *Othello*), the *Ecatommiti*, in which the Sack of Rome replaces Boccaccio’s great Pestilence as the tragic background; but his *Discorsi*—notwithstanding their learned pedantry—are full of invaluable matter to the student of Ariosto’s life and work. Both Ercole Bentivoglio and Giraldi died in 1573.

In his *Sogno Amoro*so (an allegorical poem of one hundred and eleven stanzas in *ottava rima*, dedicated to Pietro Antonio Acciaiuoli), Ercole Bentivoglio sees the greater poet among the lovers in the garden of the Palace of Venus:—

‘Io vidi l’Ariosto, e seco quella
Per cui tremò già d’amoroso zelo;
Onde ei, volando con quelle ale ch’ella
Li porge, il suo bel nome porta al cielo.’¹

Shortly after his return from Castelnovo, Alessandra Strozzi appears to have become Ariosto’s wife. The marriage was kept a strict secret, as the poet (though not in orders) was nominally the Archpriest of Santa Agata and held other benefices. By day, Messer Lodovico was merely her secretary, *il suo cancelliere*, as he styles himself in the letters he wrote in her name; they lived in different houses; and, when the poet passed the night with her, the thing had to be managed

¹ ‘I saw Ariosto, and with him her for whom of old he trembled with loving desire; whereby, soaring with those wings that she gives him, he is bearing her fair name to the skies’ (*Il Sogno Amoro*so e l’*Egloge di Hercole Bentivogli*, Venice, 1530).

with all the furtive secrecy of a discreditable intrigue. Several of his minor poems give expression to the varied feelings excited by this, to say the least of it, very peculiar situation.¹ He loved her madly and rapturously to the end. It is impossible to decide how far the secret was an open one to all their friends; but the letters still extant, written by Ariosto both in his name and in hers to Gian Francesco Strozzi, on domestic matters and on the affairs of the Strozzi family, seem to show that these latter at least understood the situation. We have no evidence to enable us to fix the date of this clandestine marriage; it is sometimes stated that she had been the poet's mistress for some years previously; but this is a mere matter of conjecture.

Writing to Lorenzo Strozzi at Florence from Ferrara on October 5, 1525, Alessandra gives a somewhat piteous picture of her poverty at the time of the death of her first husband, Messer Tito. She represents herself as almost dependent upon the Strozzi of Ferrara (Messer Guido, brother of the murdered Ercole, and his wife, Madonna Simona) for support, and protests vigorously against the belief entertained by the Strozzi of Florence that Messer Tito had left her well supplied with money. 'Would to God,' she says, 'that this had been true, for then I should not have suffered the hardships that I have suffered, and am still suffering, and I should have been able to make better arrangements for my family than I have done, and I should not have consumed ten years of the flower of my age in widowhood, as I have done, subject to a thousand rash judgments, as often happens to poor foreign women who have no resources nor any relations to whom to turn.' This, if taken literally, would seem to imply that Tito had died in 1515 (and was thus still living at the time of her meeting Ariosto at Florence) and that, in October, 1525, she was still not married to Lodovico. We also learn from this letter that she had three daughters, all dowerless. Two had been placed by her husband while children in a convent at Florence, where they were unhappy; the third, whom she had kept by her and educated, was in a monastery near Mantua, where she had been placed by means of the

¹ Especially *Elegies* v., vi., and vii.

ex-Queen of Naples, 'and every time I have news of her, it brings me the greatest consolation.' The letter is not that of an affectionate mother, but certainly conveys the impression that Alessandra had been a good and faithful wife to Messer Tito until his death.¹ We may add that it is not until the beginning of 1531 that Ariosto first appears in her letters in the garb of her secretary.

In 1527, Lodovico separated from his three surviving brothers, Gabriele, Galasso, Alessandro (Carlo was already dead), and divided the family patrimony with them. He had previously (in June, 1526) bought a little cottage in the Contrada di Mirasole, near San Benedetto. During the next two years, he bought pieces of land round about it, and made a pleasant garden—a garden which became his delight and chief recreation—in which he built the house which (considerably modernised and altered) is still piously visited by all who come to Ferrara. Over the door he put up the epigram which still stands, beginning *parva sed apta mihi*, and in the loggia the pleasant Latin lines entitled *De paupertate*.² Upon this house and garden, his son Virginio tells us, he spent all that he could spare from his income: 'And, because what was done did not entirely correspond with his notions, he used often to complain that it was not so easy for him to change buildings as his verses; and, when men told him that they wondered that he did not make a fine house, as he was a person who depicted palaces so well, he answered that he made these latter fine without money.'

Ercole Bentivoglio's fifth Satire gives a singularly complete and vivid picture of the daily life of a Ferrarese gentleman of literary tastes at this time. He rises with the sun, laying stress on the fact that he scorns and loathes the use of scent in his toilet, and spends an hour by himself in his study reading, *intento sopra i cari libri*. It is only the gluttons of the epoch, Mariano and Rizzuolo, who take any breakfast. Then he goes out to take exercise until dinner, and, if it is a feast-

¹ The first of Alessandra's letters in Cappelli, pp. 319-323. It is said to have been written by Ariosto like the later ones, but there is nothing in the letter itself to show this. I have not been able to consult the opuscoli of G. Pardi (*La Moglie dell' Ariosto*, Ferrara, 1901) and Adolfo Vital (*Di alcuni documenti riguardanti Alessandra Benucci*, Conegliano, 1901).

² *Carm.* ii. 28 and 29.

day, he hears Mass: 'I go to the temple to crave pardon of God, and to hear what the Gospel teaches.' After dinner, he talks of women and war, and plays cards a little. Then to work:—

'Poi con l' animo a Phebo tutto volto,
Me 'n vado a ber del suo Aganippe l' onde
Poco utili hoggi, ma soavi molto.
E quattro hore con lui liete e gioconde
Trappasso in dolce e solitario horrore,
Sì vago son de le sue verdi fronde.'¹

After four hours with the Muses, relaxation is needed. The poet leaves his house late in the afternoon, and strolls out into the piazza for a couple of hours, as a superior person to amuse himself with the amazing reports and rumours of the would-be politicians of the market-place:—

'Quivi se Mercatel trovo o Thomasso,
Gli affermo che d' udir quella lor ciancia
E le novelle lor pigliomi spasso.
Sappiate (dicono eglino) che Francia
Fra un mese ne verrà nemica a Spagna,
A far il Papa battersi la guancia ;
E scendon tanti fanti d' Alemagna,
Che tosto udiren dir che l' Ambro e l' Ada
Correran sangue et ogni lor campagna ;
Il Doria nuovamente una masnada
Presso Modon d' infidi Greci ha presa,
E distrutta co'l fuoco e con la spada ;
La gente di Luther de l' Alpi è scesa
Et è qui presso homai, che vien per porre
Le nuove leggi a la Romana Chiesa.
Mentre che così cianciano, ogn' huom corre ;
Et io da sì ridicula corona
Partomi al fin, che l' animo l' abhorre :
E me 'n vado al cortil, dove una buona
Hora passeggio con gl' amici meco
Bramosi di poggjar spesso Helicon.
Se l' Ariosto v' è, ragiono seco ;
Spesso insieme ridiam di Marco Guazzo
E d' un altro Romanzo così cieco,
Chè si pensò con le sue rime il pazzo

¹ 'Then, with my mind all turned to Phoebus, I go to drink the waters of his Aganippe (of small utility to-day, but very sweet);

'And four joyous and pleasant hours I pass with him in sweet and solitary gloom, so desirous am I of his green boughs.'

Di vincere il *Furioso* ; e d' altri molti,
 Che di guerre cantar, prendiam sollazzo.
 Et hor con l' Acciaiuol parlo de i volti,
 De i modi de le donne ; e quai sian belle
 E quai sian brutte, e come noi fan stolti.'¹

The ladies thus disposed of, the inevitable obscenities at the expense of the monks follow, until, surfeited with scandalous stories about the Carthusians of the Certosa, the poet goes to supper—where he finds a somewhat uncongenial party assembled. This over, some go to bed, others to dice, others to less reputable occupations and places of resort, while the poet returns to his books :—

' Me 'n vado a legger io gran pezza, e quando
 Tener aperti più gli occhi non posso,
 Che 'l sonno a poco a poco va abbassando,
 Tra le lenzuola co 'l buon panno addosso
 Vado a giacer insin che l' Orizzonte
 Cominci, come dissi, a farsi rosso.'²

Life was passing gaily and peaceably at the Court of Ferrara

¹ 'Here if I find Mercatello or Tommaso, I assure them that I am delighted to hear their chatter and their news.

'Know (say they) that France within a month will declare war on Spain, to make the Pope rue the day ; and so many soldiers are coming down from Germany that soon shall we hear say that the Ambro and the Adda and all their district will run blood. Doria has lately taken a band of faithless Greeks near Modon, and destroyed them with fire and sword. The hordes of Luther have crossed the Alps and are now close at hand, who come to force their new laws upon the Roman Church !

'Whilst they chatter thus, the folk rush round ; and I at last depart from so ridiculous a group, for my soul abhors them ; and I go off to the cortile, to stroll an hour with friends who long with me often to climb up Helicon.

'If Ariosto is there, I talk with him ; we often laugh together at Marco Guazzo (and at another romance as blind), for the lunatic thought with his rhymes to surpass the *Furioso* ; and we amuse ourselves with many others who sang of wars.

'And now I speak with Acciaiuoli about the faces and fashions of the women ; which are fair and which ill-favoured ; and what fools they make of us.'

² 'I go away to read a good while, and when I can no more keep open my eyes, which sleep is gradually weighing down, I go to lie between the sheets with a good coverlet over me, until the East begins (as I said) to grow red.'

Marco Guazzo, Mantuan soldier and historian, had written *Belisardo Fratello del Conte Orlando*, a long poem of which three books were published at Venice in 1525. The other romance referred to as *cieco* can hardly be Francesco Bello's *Mambriano* (as sometimes stated). Ariosto's imitators were many. Writing from Arezzo on June 1, 1532, Giovanni Pollio tells Pietro Aretino that he has read his two cantos of *Marphisa*, and is convinced that, if the other cantos are as great, they will not only equal but far surpass those of Ariosto (*Lettere scritte al Signor Pietro Aretino*, i. p. 137).

during these early thirties of the sixteenth century. War had practically ceased. Although the Pope still refused to accept the Emperor's decision, there was no immediate danger to be apprehended from that or any other quarter. Balls and banquets, pageants, tournaments, and representations of comedies followed each other in rapid and endless succession. Under Ariosto's direction, a permanent stage in imitation of the supposed fashion of antiquity had been erected in the Sala Grande of the Corte Vecchia, with magnificent fixed scenery designed by himself on purpose for his comedies, and painted probably by Dosso Dossi and his pupils, representing, we may say, the ideal city of the poet's dreams. It will be borne in mind that in the comedy of the Renaissance, as in that of republican Rome, the action always takes place in a street in front of the house, so that there was never any change in the background. 'That scene,' wrote Girolamo da Sestula to Isabella d'Este, 'is so beautiful that it makes everything seem beautiful.' This was on the occasion of the performance of the *Captivi* of Plautus in February, 1531. Possibly this was the work of Celio Calcagnini, who is known to have translated other Plautine comedies for the Carnival of the following year, 1532; but, in any case, the whole direction of the Ferrarese stage in both these years was in the hands of Messer Lodovico, who was the heart and soul of all these performances. His *Cassaria*, in its final and enlarged form, was first played on the Sunday of the Carnival of 1531, and was enthusiastically received. It was repeated in the following year.¹ The *Lena* seems also to have been given again in 1532; and, though there is no record of its first performance, and there are chronological difficulties connected with the prologue, the *Negromante* had probably been put upon the boards in 1530 or thereabouts.

It is from the letters to the Marchesana Isabella of her agents and correspondents in Ferrara that we get the most vivid glimpses of the Ferrarese festivities of these days. While Girolamo da Sestula keeps her informed of the comedies

¹ Fontana, i. pp. 154, 163; cf. below, Chapter xiii. On January 25, 1531, young 'Don Checchin' gave a performance of the *Phormio* of Terence. Cf. A. d'Ancona, *Origini*, ii. p. 430.

that are being represented, Battista Stabellino (known as 'Demogorgon') supplies her with full accounts of the social functions and the costumes of the ladies—a matter in which the mother of the Duke of Mantua still took the liveliest interest. At a festa given at the Corte Vecchia by Renée on September 11, 1530, Stabellino found things moving gallantly in the Sala Grande. 'I found the most illustrious Lady Renata dancing, holding by the hand the Infanta of the Queen of Naples. And the Lord Don Francesco followed after, having by the hand the Infanta Donna Giulia (alias the Duchess Elect of Mantua, but not confirmed as far as our intelligence goes). The most illustrious Lord Don Ercole followed next, and he held the hand of one of the daughters of Madame de Soubise; and so, hand in hand, followed many others, dancing and sweetly discoursing of love.'

Most of the ladies were dressed in the new Portuguese fashion, which the writer of the letter greatly admires; the hair gathered up into a golden or silken coif under a little velvet cap with a white feather, and a high collar round the neck of the same material as the dress—brocaded silk in the case of Renée, black or crimson silk her maids-of-honour, while Madonna Beatrice de' Pii (the wife of Ariosto's friend, Gasparo degli Obizzi) wore hers of crimson damask with the coif all of golden thread. But the daughters of the Queen of Naples, probably because of their poverty, were still dressed in the Ferrarese fashion, with dresses cut low in the neck as we see in the pictures of a slightly earlier epoch. 'And so was the daughter of the Lord of Rimini, with her white dress all cut low down according to her wont, who is making great haste to grow old. There, too, was beautiful Madonna Barbara, and she also is rapidly going towards her sunset.' 'The Lampognana, Madonna Violante, all dressed in black mourning, was there, looking on at the dancing, and she was standing leaning against one of the balconies of the hall, talking with your Excellence's nephew, Don Ippolito.'¹

¹ Letter of September 12, 1530. Fontana, i. pp. 144-146. Ginevra Malatesta, daughter of Pandolfo di Roberto Malatesta, the dispossessed Lord of Rimini, could not really have been getting old at this time. She married the son of Gasparo degli Obizzi, and her praises are sung in the last canto of the *Furioso* (xlvi. 5, 6), where Barbara Turca, 'la bella ma più saggia e honesta,' is also celebrated.

The inner meaning of this putting on of Portuguese fashions in the Ferrarese Court is derived from the fact that the Emperor was the husband of Isabella of Portugal; at an earlier historical epoch, in the days of Charles VIII. of France, the Ferrarese had analogously aroused the suspicions of their neighbours by dressing like Frenchmen. A few days later, Stabellino writes to the Marchesana that the ladies of Ferrara, 'their magnificences,' were all preparing to adopt the Portuguese fashion of dress, 'since that dress is right beauteous and honest'; when Renée herself suddenly abandoned it, 'because this Madame de Soubise, who is in charge of her ladyship, persuades her that she should on no account leave off her French costume, which is honest and holy, for this Portuguese, and our Lady, who does nothing save what this one wills, has returned to her former way of dressing and persists in it.'¹ This was surely the proverbial straw that shows which way the wind blows.

In the following March, Stabellino tells his illustrious correspondent of a sumptuous entertainment given by the young Archbishop Ippolito at Belfiore 'to our most illustrious Lady Renée with all her Frenchwomen, and to many of our gentlewomen of the city, such as the Lady Madonna Diana de' Contrari, the Lady Violante da Lampognano, and both the two daughters of the Queen of Naples.' After the banquet, there was dancing to the sound of the pipers, when suddenly a blast of trumpets in the garden called the ladies to the windows, and a gallant show of armed knights appeared led by their host, Don Ippolito himself. To these entered through the garden, in Arthurian wise, a solitary knight-errant, a glowing splendour of white and gold (no other than Don Ercole), who demanded battle. Then followed some jousting (of a somewhat milder kind than the strenuous Middle Ages, which they strove to represent, would have approved) and tilting at the ring; after which Renée got into her litter with the two Neapolitan princesses, and, with her damsels riding after her, the gentlewomen following in their carriages, accompanied by the troop of knights in all their tilting splendour and a large band of Ferrarese gentlemen,

¹ Letter of September 28, 1530. Fontana, i. pp. 148, 149.

went in triumph through the whole city, to the great delight of the people, and so back to the ducal palace.

A passage at the end of the letter is a highly significant illustration of the effect of papal politics upon the city, which, in the old Duke Ercole's days, had undoubtedly been one of the most religious in Italy:—

‘This day seems to me, most illustrious Lady mine, to have been right happy; for, at this same time that these lords were enjoying themselves and making merry, a beautiful procession was being made in the city, with all the orders of friars and priests. And to the great Cross that is carried in procession in front of the clergy there was attached a large papal bull, a thing that is not usually done; and this is said to be for the Crusade, in order to get money to go against the Turk—or against Siena. But, verily, I can tell you that they will get little silver from here, because among us there is not much belief in these ecclesiastical matters, and I think that it will not be long before we shall all be Lutherans, and shall believe sooner in the Mahometan faith and the law of the Turk than in the religion of the priests.’¹

The chronicler of Modena, coming to Ferrara at the beginning of 1532, looks upon all this with disapproving eyes, contrasting the gaiety of the capital with the miserable condition of his own city. Under Sunday, January 21, he writes: ‘The Lord Duke has had a great dancing festivity held in the Court, and they are preparing to have comedies and other fair representations in Ferrara, and they are all enjoying themselves and making merry with masquerading, music, and song; while we poor Modenese are tormented by the Spaniards who are quartered at Ravarino, at Stuffiono, at Nonantola, at San Cesario, at Savignano, Vignola, and Spilamberto in such wise that we are being totally ruined.’ And he adds a week later, when a ducal order had been issued forbidding masquerading in Modena: ‘In Ferrara they masquerade by day and night, and are in Paradise; and we are in Hell, among soldiers within and without the city who are devouring all we have, and we are deprived of every pleasure.’²

¹ Letter of March 23, 1531. Fontana, i. pp. 154-157.

² T. de' Bianchi, iii. pp. 388, 390.

Renée's first baby, Anna (the future Duchess of Guise), was born on November 16, 1531. The Pope was invited to stand as godfather; he delegated Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici to represent him, and the young Cardinal delegated a better man than either, Guicciardini, who was then governor of Bologna, to act in his stead.

We have just seen Stabellino describe the Infanta Donna Giulia of Aragon as 'the Duchess Elect of Mantua, but not confirmed as far as our intelligence goes.' The remarkable matrimonial proceedings of Federigo Gonzaga call for more than a word of notice. In April, 1517, on his return from France, he had married, *per verba de presenti*, Maria Paleologa, the daughter of Guglielmo, the Marquis of Monferrato. Guglielmo died in the following year, and was succeeded by his son Bonifazio, a delicate boy of five, whose mother, Anne d'Alençon, ruled the state. The position of the marquise of Monferrato and its capital, Casale, made the succession a matter of great importance for the balance of political power in northern Italy. Giovanni Giorgio Paleologo, the brother of the late Marquis, was a complete invalid; and Federigo, in the event of Bonifazio dying without an heir, expected to secure the imperial investiture for Maria, who was still a mere child. But, when the time came in 1524 for him to bring her to Mantua and make her effectually his wife, the Gonzaga declined to fulfil his obligation; he was looking higher, and needed a royal princess to satisfy his ambition. At the same time he was completely swayed by his mistress, Isabella Boschetti (wife of Francesco Gonzaga of Calvisano), who had borne him a son in 1520. In June, 1528, a conspiracy to poison this Isabella was discovered; her husband, who was privy to it, fled to Modena, where Federigo had him murdered. Federigo then accused the Marchesa Anne of Monferrato, his prospective mother-in-law, of having instigated the plot, and induced Pope Clement, after much hesitation, to issue a brief in May, 1529, dissolving his marriage with Maria.¹ No royal princess being forthcoming, Federigo would have been content with the Pope's kinswoman, Caterina de' Medici, but his Holiness was not willing, because of the

¹ Davari, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-36, and Document 2.

Marchese's notoriously immoral life.¹ It was under these circumstances that Andrea Doria had proposed the Infanta Giulia to him, with promise of imperial favour and a large dowry from the Emperor.

Giulia was thirty-eight years old (whereas Federigo was only thirty), exceedingly unattractive, and of doubtful reputation. Nevertheless, at Mantua, when he made Federigo a Duke, the Emperor persuaded him to agree to marry her. Federigo attempted to obtain from Charles that, if he had no legitimate heir by Giulia, his bastard, Alessandro, whom his mistress had borne him, should succeed to the duchy. But Isabella d'Este and Alfonso of Ferrara, his mother and uncle, at once appealed to the Emperor in person, who assured the latter that he would never consent to such a thing.² The betrothals of Federigo and Giulia were celebrated at Mantua by proxy (the princess being at Ferrara). But hardly had the Emperor left Italy when, on June 6, 1530, the Marchese Bonifazio of Monferrato died of a fall from his horse whilst hunting. His uncle, Giovanni Giorgio, succeeded him, but was himself rapidly sinking into the grave, and it was clear that Maria would shortly inherit all the dominions of the Paleologi. This being so, the chief citizens of Mantua (presumably at the instigation of the Court) pressed Federigo to repudiate Giulia and go back to Maria—for whose hand the Duke of Milan and the Count Palatine were preparing to come forward as suitors. Maria professed still to be in love with Federigo, who hypocritically sent to inform the Emperor that his confessor, under pain of excommunication, was forcing him to keep his former pledge to her, and that he could not in conscience marry Giulia. The Pope issued a brief declaring that Federigo's previous marriage with Maria (which his Holiness had dissolved a year before) was valid; but, on September 15, Maria herself suddenly died. The Marchesa Anne at once offered Federigo the hand of her second daughter, Margherita, for whom innumerable other candidates were already in the field.

¹ Antonio Soriano, *Relazione della Corte di Roma*, in Alberi, *loc. cit.*, pp. 283, 284.

² Davari, *op. cit.*, pp. 49, 50.

The Emperor, who intended that the Count Palatine should marry Margherita, was at first indignant and disgusted; but at length, moved by the Mantuan ambassador's appeal to his compassion for the young Duke, he said he would consent when Rome had spoken. In March, 1531, the Curia annulled the dissolution of Federigo's marriage with Maria, declared that the contract with Giulia was invalid and null, and granted a dispensation for the marriage with Margherita. Upon this, in spite of opposition from the agents of the Duke of Milan, Charles consented, with the stipulation that Federigo should be obliged to pay Giulia an annual pension of three thousand ducats.¹ On October 3, Federigo and Margherita were married at Casale, the unlucky Duke of Milan himself being present, and Antonio de Leyva representing the Emperor. We shall soon see that there was a still more 'amazing marriage' in store for the repudiated Giulia.

Virginio Ariosti, though a minor, was the rector of a benefice of the title of S. Mauro in Fossalta, worth a hundred scudi annually. In February, 1530, we find Messer Lodovico acting as his son's procurator in a lawsuit concerning the land connected with this benefice.² In the April of this same year, Ariosto had him legitimated again by Cardinal Campeggio at Bologna. He does not seem to have attempted anything of the kind in the case of his elder son, Giovanni Battista, who appears to have returned temporarily to Ferrara about this time, and to whom he left an annuity in his last will and testament. In fact, all Ariosto's paternal affection was given to Virginio. He had already educated him to the best of his power, and now, in February, 1531, he sent him to the Studio of Padua with a special introduction to Pietro Bembo:—

¹ Dallari, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-71; Antonio Soriano, *loc. cit.*, p. 283; Sanudo, *liv. col.* 430.

² Baruffaldi, p. 203. We read in the Chronicle of Modena, under November, 1528: 'They say that on the 23rd of this month died Messer Lodovico di Pancera, a Modenese priest, who had the *plebe* of Salexe and that of Torre de Prede Bon, which they say he has resigned to a son of Messer Lodovico of the Ariosti of Ferrara. He died suddenly; a few days before, I had seen him under his portico and he looked as if he would last a hundred years' (T. de' Bianchi, *ii.* p. 441). This, which apparently refers to some other benefice held by Virginio, is the only mention of Ariosto in Tomasino's Chronicle.

' Bembo, io vorrei, come è il comun disio
 De' solleciti padri, veder l'arti
 Che esaltan l' huom tutte in Virginio mio ;
 E perchè di esse in te le miglior parti
 Veggio e le più, di questo alcuna cura
 Per l'amicitia nostra vorrei darti.
 Non creder però ch' esca di misura
 La mia domanda, ch' io voglia tu facci
 L'ufficio di Demetrio o di Musura.
 Non si danno a' par tuoi simili impacci ;
 Ma sol che pensi e che discorri teco,
 E saper da gli amici ancho procacci,
 S' in Padova o in Vinegia è alcun buon Greco,
 Buono in scientia e più in costumi, il quale
 Voglia insegnargli, e in casa tener seco.
 Dottrina habbia e bontà, ma principale
 Sia la bontà, chè, non vi essendo questa,
 Nè molto quella, alla mia estima, vale.'¹

Thus opens the delightful sixth Satire. But the actual letter, which the young man presumably took with him to present to the great scholar, is in a somewhat different tone:—

' My son Virginio comes to Padua to study. I have charged him that the first thing that he does is to come to pay his respects to your Lordship, and to make himself known to you as your servant. I pray your Lordship to be pleased to lend him your patronage wherever he has need of it, and, whenever you see him, to admonish him and exhort him not to throw away his time. I offer myself and commend myself always to you. I have nearly finished revising my *Furioso*. Then I

¹ ' Bembo, I would fain, as is the common desire of careful fathers, see all the Arts that exalt man in my Virginio ;

' And, because I see most of them and their better parts in thee, I would lay some care for this on thee, for our friendship's sake.

' Do not, however, believe that my request so exceeds the bounds that I would have thee do the office of Demetrio or of Musura.

' Such burdens are not laid on men like thee ; but I would only take thought and discuss with thee, and strive, too, to know from our friends,

' If in Padua or in Venice there is any good Greek, good in knowledge and more in mode of life, who will instruct him and keep him with him in his house.

' Let him have learning and goodness, but let goodness come first, for, if this be not there, neither in my estimation is the other worth much' (*Sat.* vi. 1-18).

The Demetrio named is probably Demetrio Calcondila, an Athenian, who was a friend of Bembo's father, and taught Greek at Florence and Milan in the last years of the fifteenth century. Marco Musuro, a Cretan by birth, and a friend of Aldo, professed Greek at Padua a little later.

shall come to Padua to confer with your Lordship, and to learn from you what I am not competent to know by myself. May God always guard you.’¹

‘It is true,’ wrote Marco Pio to Guidobaldo della Rovere, that Messer Lodovico Ariosto has added four cantos in the middle of his book, but he has not yet given them to the public; though he says that he will soon give them, because he intends to have the whole book reprinted together, in which (besides these cantos) he has also changed stanzas, verses, and words very greatly, and he informs me that he will not have it printed until September. But, be it when it may, your Excellence shall have a copy at once.’²

Giraldi, who professes to have been constantly with Ariosto in these last years of his life, has left us a minute account of the poet’s labours in the preparation of this final and definitive edition of the *Orlando Furioso*. ‘For the space of sixteen years after the first edition,’ he writes, ‘he revised his poem; nor did ever a day pass, during all that time, in which he was not working upon it, both with his pen and with his thought. Then, when he had revised, augmented, and corrected it to what seemed to him the right point, he brought it to many fair and excellent wits of Italy, to have their judgment upon it: such as Monsignor Bembo, Molza, Navagero, and many others of whom he makes mention in the last canto; and, having got their opinion, he went home. And even as Apelles did of old with his paintings, so did he with his work; for, two years before he gave the book to the press, he placed it in a room of his house and let it be judged by whoso would. And finally, having obtained so many opinions, in the city and without, he adhered to those which seemed best to him.’ We may, perhaps, detect a note of exaggeration here, as Giraldi is holding a brief for the last edition of the poem against Girolamo Ruscelli who was bringing forward new corrections, ascribing them to Ariosto, after the poet’s death. But, a little further on, he gives more details:—

‘Ariosto, that happy spirit born verily for this kind of poetry, was wont to take counsel over his compositions with men of letters, and especially with those who were excellent

¹ Letter clxxv. Ferrara, February 23, 1531.

² Letter of July 8, 1531. Baruffaldi, Document 19.

in composing in the vernacular; and many times, according to their judgment, did he change, cut out, add, vary. And it was his custom, first of all, to see if he (before anything was said to him) could perceive what those with whom he took counsel about his verses wanted of him. Therefore these latter were wont to mark or to underline what seemed to them to need correction; then they left him to reflect upon it; and, if he was satisfied that he perceived what they wanted of him, he sought no further. If not, he would want to know their meaning, and, if it pleased him, he accepted it; if not, he remained in his own opinion. In this way, it can be said that in his poem is the critical judgment of all the excellent composers of the time in which he published the last edition, with the seal of his last hand.’¹

In the summer of 1531, we find Ariosto obtaining the ‘privileges’ (what we should now call the copyright) for its publication in their respective dominions from the Duke of Mantua, the Duke of Milan, the Emperor, and (by a brief of January 31, 1532) from the Pope. He had already, in 1527, obtained the Venetian copyright from the Doge, Andrea Gritti. At the beginning of the new year, we find him asking the Duke of Mantua for the same permission to have the paper brought from Salò for the printing through Mantuan territory without paying duty, as the Duke’s father had granted him sixteen years before, and thanking him warmly for giving it. ‘I will strive not to appear ungrateful for so much kindness,’ he writes, ‘and, also in this little addition which I am going to make to my *Furioso*, your Excellence will be able to see that I have spoken honourably of you.’² ‘At present I am so occupied in sending my *Furioso* again to press with some additions,’ he tells Giovan Jacomo Calandra in March, ‘that I can attend to nothing else.’³ By the middle of April, 1532, the great work was done.

In the latter part of April, 1532, Alfonso went incognito with Don Francesco to Venice, whither the Duke of Urbino and his son, Don Guidobaldo, also came. On May 15, writes the diarist, ‘the Lord Duke of Ferrara left for Ferrara, with his

¹ *Discorso de’ Romanzi (Scritti estetici, vol. i.)*, pp. 140, 216, 217.

² Letters clxxvii. and clxxx. Ferrara, January 15 and February 17, 1532.

³ Letter clxxxii. Ferrara, March 18, 1532.

brigantines and many small boats; and his Ferrarese carried away quantities of goods, without paying any duty, saying that they belonged to the Duke and his son, Don Checchin. During these days the Duke has dressed unceremoniously, and gone through the Rialto to see things, with very great pleasure, and he has been about in a boat together with Ser Catarin Zeno di Ser Piero, his great friend.¹ Ariosto probably accompanied the Duke, and thus had what was destined to be his last sight of Venice. An amusing, if rather trivial, anecdote, related in a medical treatise by the Duke's physician, Antonio Musa Brasavola, as an example of the effects of salt-water, probably belongs to this date. 'I have experienced sea-water,' he writes, 'to my great discomfort. For when I was at Venice with the most illustrious and most excellent Alfonso, third Duke of Ferrara, he embarked in a gondola with the magnificent Catarin Zeno, and summoned me and the magnificent Lodovico Ariosto to bear him company. The most illustrious Duke and the magnificent Zeno sat in the stern, Ariosto and I in the prow, and the Duke ordered the Venetian boatmen to go out of the Porto de' Castelli, and they rowed for two miles from the port into the open sea.' A storm coming on, the Duke ordered them to return to port, which they did, cleaving the waves, which dashed over the prow, drenching the unfortunate poet and doctor—the latter of whom, thinking that the boat would certainly be submerged, resolved to cling to the Duke, 'for I knew that he used to swim like a fish.' Safely arrived at his house at Murano, Alfonso began to mock his medical adviser for his having been compelled to undergo his salt-water cure, boasting that, if the boat had sunk, he would have saved himself by swimming. To Antonio Musa's retort that he would have had to save him too, or they would have drowned together, the Duke answered by showing him his dagger, and declaring that he would have cut off his hands, if he had clung to him; so the whole thing ended in merriment.² But the sensations of Ariosto, who, his

¹ Sanudo, lvi. coll. 162, 214.

² Antonii Musae Brassavoli medici Ferrariensis, *De medicamentis tam simplicibus, quam compositis catharticis, quae unicuique humori sunt propria* (Venice, 1552), pp. 9-9 v. He adds that Ercole II. (to whom the book is dedicated) gave him this very dagger as a gift, when he accompanied him to Rome in 1550, to visit Pope Julius III.

biographers tell us, loathed and dreaded being on the water, and whose health was daily growing weaker, may be left to the imagination.

During this summer, we have a little series of letters written by Ariosto, partly in his own name, partly in that of Alessandra, concerning the proposed marriage of Gian Francesco Strozzi to Elena, one of the daughters of Messer Guido, the head of the Ferrarese branch of the Strozzi, who had just been appointed ducal commissary in Romagna. The letters are interspersed with various commissions and suggestions about fashions of dress and jewellery, in which Madonna Alessandra had evidently a pretty taste. Indeed, the lady seems to have made herself very busy over the bride's trousseau—the greater part of which, apparently, the bridegroom had himself to supply. White and gold, Alessandra assures him, is what suits the girl best, and she exhorts him while he is about it not to think of expense, but to do the thing in a magnificent fashion. Ariosto, in the meanwhile, is exerting himself to find a suitable house for the young pair in Ferrara; the Trotti have a house that would serve their turn, but, unfortunately, they will not let it, but only sell it; this, however, is solved by Messer Guido consenting that the two shall live in his house while he is away at Lugo, the seat of government of the Ferrarese Romagna. Gian Francesco, however, seems to have been something of a laggard in love. Messer Guido has consented to the union, and, in spite of pressure from the Duke and Don Ercole to set out for his seat of government, is waiting in Ferrara; Bonaventura Pistofilo (whose wife, Margherita Strozzi, was Guido's sister) is procuring the papal dispensation for the marriage; but, in spite of repeated exhortations from Ariosto and Alessandra, Gian Francesco lingers on at Padua, pleading important business affairs; while the rest of the family, from Modena, Carpi, and Mantua, have flocked to Ferrara, to the great inconvenience of Messer Guido, who finds his house full of guests, while he has already sent on the greater part of his possessions to Lugo.¹ However, the bride-

¹ The letters extend from June 21 to August 20, 1532. Those in Ariosto's name are numbered clxxxvii. to cxc., those in Alessandra's or their joint names given on pp. 329-335 in Cappelli. Cf. also Solerti, *L'Archivio della Famiglia Ariosto*, pp. 13, 14.

groom came at last, and the matter seems to have ended satisfactorily. The letters are of somewhat slight intrinsic interest; but they throw a pleasant and genial light upon the characters of both Ariosto and his wife, and afford a proof that the relations of Messer Lodovico with the family of her former husband were of a cordial and intimate description.

It is clear from the letters that Alessandra was still not living in Ariosto's house. For the rest, the latter was all absorbed during these months in seeing the final edition of the *Orlando Furioso* through the press. In May, immediately after the poet's return from Venice, Francesco Rosso da Valenza had begun the printing, under the personal superintendence of Messer Lodovico himself; who gave the printers no rest, perpetually going backwards and forwards in all weathers from his house to the press, tormenting himself and them over the minutest trifles of orthography and language, to make it correspond with Bembo's rules of perfect Italian diction. 'In this correction of the printing,' writes Giraldi, 'he contracted the infirmity which brought him to his death.' In spite of all this labour, when the printing was finished in September and the book published at the beginning of October, 1532, Ariosto was profoundly dissatisfied with the result, and lamented it to his son as a great misfortune that had fallen upon him. 'It seemed to him,' wrote Galasso Ariosti, two days after the poet's death, to Bembo, 'that in this last edition he had been badly served and *assassinated*.'¹ This morbid state of feeling was clearly due in part simply to ill health, unless, as has been suggested, the poet's dissatisfaction and disappointment referred only to the external features of the printing and the general get-up of the volume, which, especially in the appearance of the surviving copies printed on vellum, leaves much to be desired. In it is preserved that precious portrait of Messer Lodovico, the woodcut from a design by Titian, which may be all that we have left to us of that famous picture in which the poet, to quote Pigna's phrase, 'painted by the hand of the most excellent Titian, seems as though he were still alive.'

¹ *Delle Lettere da diversi re et principi et cardinali, et altri huomini dotti a Monsignor Pietro Bembo scritte.* Venice, 1560, pp. 71-72.

Before the book was actually published, advance copies were sent as presents to the poet's chief friends and patrons, accompanied by autograph letters. Three of these letters have been preserved: to the Duke of Mantua, the young Duchess Margherita, and the Marchesana Isabella, respectively; Ariosto delicately varying his diction to suit his relations with the three recipients. To Federigo he writes: 'Having newly reprinted my *Orlando Furioso*, better corrected than it was before, and made some additions to it, I have thought it my duty, because of the devotion that binds me to your Excellence, to send you a copy of it, being convinced that I shall be doing a thing pleasing to you; nor do I intend to publish the rest of the books until I know that your Excellence has received this.'¹ 'Since I have always been a most devoted servant of the most illustrious House of Gonzaga,' he writes to Margherita Paleologa, 'I must needs be towards your Excellence, since you have become one of that House, what I have been towards the others; and, in order that you may know me for yours, I have thought to make you a little gift of this my book of *Orlando Furioso*, which, corrected and amplified, I have just had reprinted. In your benignity, you will be content to accept it as a sign of a beginning of my devotion, and to enrol me in the number of your servants.'²

This was gallant and pretty, but the letter to the Marchesana Isabella shows, however conventionally expressed, the real affection and admiration that the poet had for the most typical woman of his age:—

'My most worshipful, most illustrious, and most excellent Lady,—I am sending to your Excellence one of my *Orlandi Furiosi*, for, having better corrected it and amplified it with six cantos and many stanzas scattered here and there throughout the book, I should think myself greatly failing in my duty, if I did not before all the others send a copy of it to your Excellence, as to her whom I reverence and adore, and to whom I know that my compositions (be they what they may)

¹ Letter of October 8, 1532. British Museum, Egerton MS. 2015. Also published by Renier, *Spigolature Ariostesche*.

² October 9, 1532. Letter excii.

1532. 8. 58

Ferrara

Il^{re} mo
et ex signor mio obbro. haundo io di nuovo ristampato il
mio Orlando furioso e meglio corretto che nō era; e fatto gli gressi
addition, mi e paruto offer mio debito p la scrivita esio so cō una
extrā di farliue coppia. persuadendomi di farli cosa grata, ne pma
lo p publicar gli altri libri esio sappia et vō ex nō habbin
hauuto qsto il quale le mando p uno et gin fu scuritor di nō
mī coglia et al pnte Sabita in Mantoua il quale pel scurito
et mī fa di portar questo libro: e che e stato piu d'ora di ad offer
tar et si finisen, parandomi hauer di nō poco obbligo lo rero
mādo a vō extrā in certa cosa che cerca di ottener da esā
et i buona gratia di quella mi raccomādo semp fixy o tūuo
o d' 1532

Di vō ex^{tin}

Dol^{no} Scrittore Ludouico
Ariosto

MACBETH.

HOLOGRAPH LETTER FROM ARIOSTO TO DUKE FEDERIGO GONZAGA.

(EGERTON MS. 2015.)

are wont to be most acceptable. You will deign to accept it, together with the good spirit with which I make you this little gift; and to your good graces I ever commend myself. Ferrara, October 9, 1532. Your Excellence's most devoted servant, Lodovico Ariosto.¹

The Marchesana answered promptly in the same strain :—

‘Magnificent Messer Lodovico,—Your book of *Orlando Furioso*, which you have sent me, has been most acceptable to me from every point of view; and especially because, as you have freshly corrected and amplified it, as you write me, I cannot but re-promise myself surely to get new pleasure and delight in reading it. I thank you with all my power for showing that you still remember me, and I assure you that I long for an occasion to present itself to me to be able to gratify you in some way and give you proof of the singular affection that I bear you, for your most rare virtues, which deserve to be favoured. So from my heart do I offer myself ever for all your pleasures and commands. From Venice, October 15, 1532. Isabella, Marchesa of Mantua.’²

Federigo answered cordially, a couple of days later, thanking Ariosto effusively, and expressing his regret that he could not give the bearer of the book (whom Ariosto had recommended to him) the office that he wanted.³ A presentation copy had also been sent by the poet to Guidobaldo della Rovere, and the young prince of Urbino (less experienced, perhaps, than the Gonzagas in this sort of thing) was not quite sure what was expected of him in return, and had been asking his father's ambassador in Ferrara, Antonio Butio, to find out what the others had done. ‘I have not been able to hear,’ wrote Antonio, ‘that up to now any one has made a present to our friend for the gift of the book, or for having been named cursorily in those few new stanzas, although I have kept a close look-out and have inquired of persons who would know.’⁴

¹ Letter cxcī.

² D'Arco, *op. cit.*, Document 90.

³ Letter of October 17. Luzio and Renier, in the *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, xxxv. pp. 229-231.

⁴ Letter of December 18, 1532. Baruffaldi, Document 20. Marco Pio had wanted to send a copy to Guidobaldo, but Ariosto had insisted upon sending it himself. *Ibid.*, Document 22 (Letter of Marco Pio, dated Ferrara, October 10, 1532, in which it is stated that the printing was finished that morning).

In the autumn of this year, 1532, the Emperor came again to Italy. Alfonso d'Este and Federigo Gonzaga met him at the frontier and escorted him to Mantua. A mile outside the gates, Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici greeted him in the name of the Pope. He entered Mantua on November 7, passed a month there in the usual round of festivities, entertainments, and pageants, and then went on to Bologna (which he reached on December 13), to spend Christmas with his Holiness. As to the question of Ferrara, Clement had assured Alfonso's orator, Jacomo Alvarotti, that he entertained the kindest feelings towards the Duke. As a mere Cardinal, he was pleased to say, he had always taken his part with Pope Leo and with Pope Adrian; but now, as Pope, he was compelled to consider the honour and interests of the Apostolic See.¹ The Emperor found him still obstinate about the compromise; in the general league formed at Bologna in the following February, 1533, for the defence of Italy, the utmost that he could induce Clement to grant Alfonso was a truce of eighteen months on the condition of his entering the league.² Great was the terror in Modena, at the end of February, when ordered to prepare for the coming of the Emperor, who proposed to pass through that city on his way back by Genoa to Spain. The whole Modenese district had been suffering terribly from the imperial soldiery, and when, in the previous December, the Emperor had stayed a couple of days in the city on his way to Bologna, the complaints had been loud against Duke Alfonso for having brought this scourge upon them. The Spaniards were detested and dreaded far more than the landsknechts. When, on the afternoon of February 28, the Emperor, accompanied by Alfonso and the Duke of Alva, arrived in Modena, he was very coldly received by the people. He passed on the following day; but the Modenese had time to feel greatly scandalised at the freedom of his glances at the ladies at the windows, at his giving no alms to the poor, and especially at the lack of reverence he had shown to St. Geminianus, whose shrine in the Duomo he had neglected to

¹ Sanudo, lvi. col. 351.

² Pistofilo, cap. ciii. Cf. Frizzi, iv. pp. 318, 319. Clement persisted in offering Ravenna and Cervia in exchange for Modena and Reggio. Sanudo, lvi. col. 512.

visit.¹ The conduct of his soldiery on this occasion was, however, somewhat better than their reputation; but Alfonso confessed to the Venetian ambassador that these imperial passages were the ruin of the territories through which they passed.

While the Emperor was at Mantua, a peculiarly unedifying solution had been found for the question of the succession of Monferrato. Giovanni Giorgio Paleologo was slowly dying. Federigo Gonzaga and the Marchesa Anne were endeavouring to secure the imperial investiture for Margherita, while the nobles of Casale, who hated the prospect of Mantuan rule, wished the dying man to marry his mistress and legitimise his young bastard, Flaminio. To prevent this, Federigo, backed by Duke Alfonso, persuaded the Emperor to induce (which, of course, meant compel) Paleologo to marry the repudiated Neapolitan Infanta, Donna Giulia, with the stipulation that, if there should be no heirs (as, indeed, it was obviously impossible that there should be any), the investiture should fall to Margherita. The disgraceful affair was carried through. On March 29, 1533, at Ferrara, Giulia was married to the Marquis by proxy—Don Diego de Mendoza holding her by the hand as the representative of the Emperor. Giulia had a state reception at Casale on April 21, and was brought into the room where her bridegroom lay on what was practically his deathbed. A week later, on April 30, he died. Antonio de Leyva at once occupied the whole marquisate of Monferrato, in the name of the Emperor. Giulia returned to Ferrara, where her mother, the ex-Queen Isabella, cut to the heart at the deathblow to her last hopes of seeing her blood re-established among the sovereigns of Italy, died of sorrow on Ascension Day, May 22. She was borne to her tomb in the convent of Santa Caterina, on a bier covered with cloth of gold, with cushions of cloth of gold under her head and feet, but clothed in the black and white habit of the nuns of St. Catherine of Siena; the Dominicans of the Angeli, some fifty or sixty in number, walked in front with white torches; while the Duke, with Ippolito and Francesco, the ambassadors, and all the Court and gentlemen of Ferrara in mourning garb, followed behind.²

¹ T. de' Bianchi, iv. pp. 216, 224-230.

² Davari, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-86; letter of May 23, 1533, from Stabellino to Isabella d'Este (Fontana, i. pp. 183, 184); Faustini, p. 9; Rodi, *MS. cit.*, f. 146.

Thus was the last link severed that seemed to connect the new Italy of the late Renaissance with the Italy of Ariosto's youth. In the following year, the Emperor had Donna Giulia and her sister brought to Spain to join their brother. Savoy and Saluzzo, as well as Mantua, claimed the state of Monferrato; but, by a diploma of November 3, 1536, the Emperor decided in favour of the Duke of Mantua, to whose duchy it was finally annexed.

In November, 1532, Ariosto had come for the last time to Mantua, to attend upon the Duke, to pay his homage to the Emperor, and in person to present him with a copy of the *Orlando Furioso*. Magnificent, indeed, was the monument of poetic praise that Messer Lodovico had raised to this latter-day Caesar in the fresh additions to his poem—a literary counterpart to the superb portraits in which, a few years later, another great Italian was to mark the character and achievements of the newest master of the world. But poetry is a more suggestive and voluble courtier than painting. Titian shows us the armed conqueror of the battlefield, an imperial forerunner of the rider on the white horse of the Apocalypse, or again the worn-out deviser of mighty policies and continent-shaking treaties. In Ariosto's stanzas (cast in the form of prophecy) we have the opening out to man of the untrodden ways of the West, the finding of 'new earths and a new world,' on the one hand, and, on the other, the effectuation of the old Dantesque ideals of the *De Monarchia*:—

'Veggio la Santa Croce e veggio i segni
Imperial nel verde lito eretti :
Veggio altri a guardia de i battuti legni,
Altri all' acquisto del paese eletti :
Veggio da dieci cacciar mille, e i regni
Di là da l' India ad Aragon soggetti :
E veggio i Capitan di Carlo Quinto
Dovunque vanno haver per tutto vinto.

'Dio vuol ch' ascosa anticamente questa
Strada sia stata, e anchor gran tempo stia,
Nè che prima si sappia che la sesta
E la settima età passata sia,
E serba a farla al tempo manifesta,
Che vorrà porre il mondo a Monarchia,

Sotto il più saggio Imperatore e giusto
Che sia stato o sarà mai dopo Augusto.

‘Del sangue d’ Austria e d’ Aragon io veggio
Nascer su ’l Reno alla sinistra riva
Un Principe, al valor del qual pareggio
Nessun valor, di cui si parli o scriva.
Astrea veggio per lui riposta in seggio,
Anzi di morta ritornata viva,
E le virtù che cacciò il mondo, quando
Lei cacciò, anchora uscir per lui di bando.

‘Per questi meriti la Bontà suprema
Non solamente di quel grande impero
Ha disegnato c’ habbia diadema
C’ hebbe Augusto, Traian, Marco e Severo ;
Ma d’ ogni terra e quindi e quindi estrema,
Che mai nè al Sol nè all’ anno apre il sentiero ;
E vuol che sotto a questo Imperatore
Solo un ovile sia, solo un pastore.’¹

Virginio Ariosti assures us that the tradition of his father having been crowned poet laureate at Mantua by the Emperor is a mere fable.² Messer Lodovico stayed for more than a month with Duke Alfonso at Mantua—probably until the

¹ ‘I see the Holy Cross and I see the imperial standards raised upon the green shore ; I see some chosen to guard the storm-beaten ships, others to conquer the country ; I see a thousand routed by ten, and the realms beyond India subdued to Aragon ; and I see the captains of Charles the Fifth victorious wherever they go.

‘God wills that this way should have been concealed of old, and be so still for a great while, nor that it should be known until the sixth and the seventh age are passed. He waits to reveal it until the time when He will make the whole world a monarchy, under the wisest and justest Emperor that has been or ever shall be after Augustus.

‘Of the blood of Austria and of Aragon I see born on the left bank of the Rhine a Prince, with whose worth I compare no worth of which men speak or write ; through him I see Astraea restored to her throne, nay, from dead brought back to life, and the virtues that the world drove out, when it drove out her, again through him return from banishment.

‘For these merits the supreme Goodness has designed that he should have the crown not only of that great Empire that Augustus, Trajan, Marcus and Severus had ; but of every remotest land, towards this pole or that, which never feels the trend of the Sun or seasons ; and wills that, under this Emperor, there be one only fold, one only shepherd’ (*Orlando Furioso*, xv. 23-26).

² ‘Egli è una baja che fosse coronato.’ It is, however, stated as a fact by Fornari, Marco Guazzo, Pigna, and other more or less contemporary writers. Cf. Baruffaldi, pp. 221-228. In a document of 1540, Alessandra is styled *uxor ex secundo matrimonio olim Nobilis et Laureati Poetae Ludovici de Ariostis*.

Emperor passed on to Bologna—and was back in Ferrara by December 17, upon which day we find him writing to Guidobaldo della Rovere, in answer to a request of the hereditary prince of Urbino for some comedy of his that had never been represented.¹ His last extant letter is dated December 25 1532, and is written in the name of Alessandra to Gian Francesco Strozzi, concerning the domestic politics of the Strozzi family and a chain that Messer Gian Francesco had sent to Alessandra apparently in payment of a debt (perhaps, the expenses she had incurred in connection with her correspondent's marriage):—

‘As to the chain that you have sent me, I thank your Lordship much, albeit there was no need for you to put yourself to this inconvenience now, since you are not better supplied with money than you can surely be; for it could be done at any time. I shall take care of it in your name as well as mine, so that you will be able to dispose of it no less than if it were in your own hands. Earnestly do I warn and pray you not to speak of having made me this gift; because, if it came to the ears of your mother-in-law, neither you nor I would ever more have peace with her. I shall keep it right well concealed, nor shall any one else know that I have it, save you and the writer of this letter.’²

There are no allusions in these two letters to the fact that the poet had come back from Mantua utterly broken down in health. On the night of the last day of the year 1532, a fire broke out in a chemist's shop under the loggia of the ducal palace of Ferrara, burned down all the shops round (there were, it seems, shops under the building, facing the piazza, just as there are now that the Corte Vecchia has become the Palazzo del Municipio), and all the parts of the palace looking upon the piazza as far as the door of the Cortile between the statues of Niccolò and Borso. ‘I was then about three years old,’ writes Pigna, ‘and from my bed I saw through the open window the flames of that great fire, and I was so terrified thereat that an ineffaceable memory of it remained with me.’ The flames reached the Sala Grande, and the magnificent scene that Ariosto had designed for his comedies was reduced to ashes.

¹ See below, pp. 347, 348.

² Cappelli, pp. 335-338.

'The burning of that scene,' writes Pigna, 'was a sign in anticipation of his death, even as a comet or a thunderbolt presages the death of princes.'¹ The poet's distress reacted upon his already enfeebled health; he fell seriously ill the same night, lingered on through the spring and summer, and at length died of consumption, shortly after sunset, on July 6, 1533.²

'To some friends who were present at his death,' writes Garofolo, 'he said that he died willingly, and all the more if it were true that men knew each other again in the other life: one hour seeming to him a thousand years until he saw again so many of his friends who were dead.' The monks of San Benedetto carried his body in procession to their church where he was buried, quietly and without any pomp, as he had himself desired. In 1573, the body was translated to the new church of the monks (the present San Benedetto), where Agostino Mosti erected a marble sepulchre to receive it. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the French occupation, it was removed to its present position in the public library of Ferrara.

From the pages of his contemporary biographers and the anecdotes preserved to us by his son, we derive a curious and pleasant picture of Ariosto's personality, which in the main agrees with that drawn by himself in his Satires. He was tall and thin, stooped somewhat, was prematurely bald, what remained of his hair being black; his forehead was spacious, his eyes black and keen, the nose large and aquiline, the beard somewhat scanty. A courtly simplicity, a dignified and reserved geniality, seems the predominant note in his character. He was affable and cheerful in his conversation, witty and ready in his speech, but not given to much laughter. All pomp and ceremony he greatly abhorred; though never in the least pretentious, he could assert his rights, was prone to take offence, and not readily pacified when injured. He was a loyal

¹ In the *Vita* prefixed to the *Orlando Furioso*, Venice, 1584. Cf. T. de' Bianchi, iv. pp. 167, 168; Faustini, pp. 11, 12.

² The true date of Ariosto's death, July 6, 1533, *a una hora di notte*, is now definitely fixed by the letter from Girolamo da Sestula to Isabella d'Este, published by Luzio and Renier, *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, xxxv. pp. 229-231. There is a curious uncertainty among his contemporaries; but almost all later writers have stated that he died on June 6.

and affectionate friend, always ready to use his influence on behalf of others. Although naturally of a melancholic disposition, he was exceedingly pleasant in society, especially among women. He hated feasting and banqueting, liked to have one meal in the day and that in the evening, when he ate fast and copiously, but preferred the simplest food and hardly noticed what it was. He was exceedingly nervous, especially when riding or on the water, crossing bridges or travelling through mountainous country. He was a great walker (surely an unusual thing in the sixteenth century), and exceedingly absent-minded, always absorbed in dreams of poetry or building. One summer, being at Carpi, he set out to take a morning stroll in light house-shoes, and, not remembering where he was or what he was doing, walked on all day till he came to Ferrara.

Never was he satisfied with what he had written, but kept on changing and amending, time after time. In conversation he would lay great stress upon polish and finish in the poetic art, but warned his hearers against overdoing it. Verses are like trees, he would say; a plant that grows up lovely by itself can be made still more beautiful by cultivation and tending; but, if this is carried to excess, it loses its natural beauty. He never kept his verses in his head, and used to complain to Virginio of the epigrams and other things that he had composed and lost. He loved gardening, but knew absolutely nothing about plants. Virginio tells us that he treated the things in his garden as he did his verses. Never would he leave anything that he had planted for more than three months in the same place. When he had planted his fruits or sown his seed, he would go so often to see if it was sprouting that he generally killed it. If anything came up anywhere near the place, he at once concluded that it was what he had planted. 'I remember,' says his son, 'that once, when he had sown capers, he went every day to see them and was immensely delighted at the beautiful crop that seemed to be growing up. At last he found that these were only elder-shoots, and that of the capers not a single one had come to birth.' We can, surely, trace something of this rare and engaging simplicity of disposition throughout all the events of Messer Lodovico's career.

Ariosto has revealed practically nothing of his inner life to us, and his contemporaries are singularly silent on this theme. He was probably reserved and uncommunicative as to his deeper thoughts and convictions. A man's spiritual life is, in the majority of cases, based upon his religion and his love; it depends, in varying degree, upon his attitude towards what he holds to be Eternal Truth and upon his relations with women. It is by nature's wise disposition that, for the most part, these two impulses are mysteriously and inextricably interwoven. We cannot dogmatise about either in the story of Lodovico's life. His poems, on the whole (though there are certain passages hard to reconcile with a living faith, save on the theory that no man really believes in religion till he can afford to laugh at it), seem to be the work of one who frankly accepted the Catholic Christianity of his day, but who, while loathing the corruption of the Curia and detesting the whole papal policy in Europe, had not the remotest sympathy with the Lutheran revolt on the one hand, nor with the reforming movement within the Church on the other.¹ These things lay outside the sphere of his interests—and in this, as in other respects, Messer Lodovico is incomparably the most Shakespearian of all the Italians of the Renaissance. We suspect that, as was the case with many others in Ferrara, the political attitude of the Popes of his day had rendered the poet somewhat indifferent to the practices and precepts of the Church. As to his relations with women, his contemporaries bear witness to the vehemence and jealousy of his disposition, and to the secrecy with which he invested his loves. That the mothers of his sons were his only mistresses in youth and early manhood would be too much to state with confidence. His life, at the worst, was purer than that of most of his contemporaries, and we can hardly doubt that these lighter loves were swallowed up and absorbed in the one

¹ Since writing this, I have read the forcible article by Ferdinando Gabotto, entitled *La Politica e la Religiosità di Messer Lodovico Ariosto*, in the *Rassegna Emiliana*, vol. ii. (Modena, 1889) pp. 209-232. Gabotto urges that, while religion in Ariosto is entirely subordinated to the idea of Italian patriotism, he nevertheless shows tendencies towards Lutheran or Protestant doctrines in his writings. But the only instance that seems to me relevant is the denunciation of the celibacy of the clergy in the fifth Satire—which, after all, is a matter of discipline, not of doctrine.

great passion, probably a lawful one even according to the conventional standard of to-day, of his later years. For the rest, in all the circumstances and conditions of life, Ariosto's standard was undeniably that of strict honour and unimpeachable righteousness. His strenuous experiences in the Garfagnana had purged away the gross adulations and courtly subserviency that had dishonoured his years beneath the yoke of the Cardinal Ippolito. We imagine him, in his closing days, almost (in this respect) as one of Dante's stoics, *che videro e credettero questo fine della vita umana essere solamente la rigida Onestà*.

'I have heard with very great sorrow of the death of Messer Lodovico Ariosto,' wrote the Marchesana Isabella; 'Ferrara has lost a gentleman who, in addition to his goodness, was the greatest ornament to her, by reason of the most rare and excellent virtues that were found in him.'¹ 'Great loss has the world suffered in such a man,' wrote Pietro Aretino, 'who, besides his talents, was goodness itself.'²

This was how Ariosto impressed all his contemporaries; a man of supreme genius, and, at the same time, an essentially good and lovable character; *era la stessa bontà*. To adapt to him a phrase which has somewhere been used of Shakespeare—he keeps the broad sunlit highway of Renaissance life. The mystical enthusiasm put upon the lips of Bembo by Castiglione is as alien from his spirit as the utter literary turpitude of Aretino. These, indeed, may be taken as the two extremes between which Messer Lodovico steers his way into the spiritual mediocrity of the *Orlando Furioso*—for, after all, mediocrity in this sense it is, albeit golden with consummate art.

¹ Letter to Girolamo da Sestula, July 14, 1533. Renier, *Spigolature Ariostesche*.

² Prologue to *La Cortigiana*. 'I have been so overwhelmed by the death of my Ariosto,' wrote Annibale Malaguzzi to Pietro Antonio Acciaiuoli, on July 23, 'that I have not yet come back to myself' (Campori, *Notizie per la Vita di Lodovico Ariosto*, p. 63). Bembo's letter to Agostino Mosti, dated Venice, August 13, 1533, praising his young correspondent for his devotion to Ariosto's memory, and promising to write a poem corresponding to 'the love for him and his great worth that I have ever had for many years,' is in vol vii. of his works (Milan, 1810), p. 388.

CHAPTER XI

THE 'ORLANDO FURIOSO'

MESSER Giovan Battista Pigna has left us a suggestive interpretation of the motives that impelled Ariosto to turn from the Latin poetry, in which he had won his first laurels, to the composition of an epic in the vernacular.

'Seeing,' writes the learned secretary of the second Duke Alfonso, 'how great was the number of Latin poets, and, what was of more consequence, to what a height some of them had ascended; and considering, on the other hand, that there was in our tongue a place not yet occupied, and into which he felt himself competent to enter; he turned his attention to Tuscan poetry, and set himself to compose in the romantic style, holding this sort of composition to correspond to the heroic and the epic. In this he knew that he could acquit himself well, and at the same time he saw that no one had written a poem of this kind with dignity and magnificence. And, in order to equip himself better for the task, knowing whence this sort of writing had its origin and what nations more than ours had entered upon this field, he strove to learn both French and Spanish, in order that he might be able to understand the art and the way with which to apply himself to it, better than in the books in our vernacular. Devoting himself laboriously to this, he has inserted into his poem several beautiful stories written in those two languages, not entire as they stand in them, but with such dexterity, more or less transformed, that he has made them even more lovely than they were. From each source gathering the best, he has gone over all the literature of Romance, even as the bee which, perceiving as it flies through the meadows many odours of different herbs and flowers, hovers over those only that are most suitable for the sweet composition that it is

preparing; and not less exceedingly sweet than very lasting. And, even as it is said of Plato having reduced various sciences of Egypt to their ultimate completion, so has Ariosto coloured the divers pictures sketched out by other masters, with such art that no more labour upon them remains for those that shall come after us. From this enterprise Bembo would fain have dissuaded him, telling him that he was more fitted for writing in Latin than in the vernacular, and that he would rise to greater eminence in the former than in the latter; but Ariosto answered that he would rather be one of the first among writers in Tuscan than barely the second among those in Latin; and he added that he felt certain to which his genius most inclined him. Persevering, therefore, in his undertaking, and turning over the different romances in his mind, he saw that there was no book among them, in any language other than ours, which had either been translated into our speech or even generally made known in Italy; and therefore he turned to our writers, among whom he took Boiardo as his model, who was very famous. And this he did, both because he knew that his *Innamoramento* had a most beautiful structure, as also in order not to introduce new names and persons and new beginnings of matters to the ears of Italians; for the Count's subjects were already fixed and established in their minds in such wise that, if he had not continued them, but had begun a different history, he would have composed a thing that would have given little pleasure.'¹

Messer Lodovico probably thought that his debt to Boiardo was too obvious and too well understood, for any special acknowledgment in the poem itself to be needed or expected. Rather curiously, his only express mention of the Count (who died, it will be remembered, when his successor was in his twenty-first year) is in a letter to the Marquis of Mantua, Francesco Gonzaga:—

‘First by Molino and then by Jerondeo, I have been informed that your Excellence would like to see a book of mine which I began a long time ago in continuation of the

¹ *I Romanzi*, pp. 73-75. A misunderstanding of this passage of Pigna's is clearly the source of the oft-repeated statement that Bembo advised Ariosto to write the *Orlando* in Latin.

invention of Count Matteo Maria Boiardo. I, as a good and most devoted servant of your Lordship, would have satisfied you at the first request, and have esteemed it a favour that you should deign to read my things, if the book had been in a state such that it could be sent into your hands. But, besides that the book is not yet polished nor finished (for it is large and needs a great deal of work), it is also written in such a fashion, with an infinite number of marginal notes and corrections, and with transpositions here and there, that it would be impossible for any one save myself to read it. And of this the most illustrious Lady Marchesana, your consort, can bear me witness; to whom, when she was in Ferrara in these days, I read a little of it. But, as I am most disposed to serve your Excellence, I will try to let you see at least a part of it, as soon as I possibly can; and I will have transcribed, beginning at the beginning, those portions that seem to me to be the least confused. When they are written, I shall send them to your most illustrious Lordship.'¹

Among Ariosto's contemporaries, Sperone Speroni criticises what he regards as Messer Lodovico's ingratitude towards Boiardo, and comments in severe terms upon his not even naming him in the poem.² But, living in such a glass-house of literary plagiarism as the present age seems to be, we modern writers are more well advised than to throw stones.

To trace all the varied romantic sources of the *Orlando Furioso*, we should have to emulate the 'pleasant and curious search made by the Curate and the Barber of Don Quixote's Library.' This has already been done with a master hand by Pio Rajna. I will content myself with reminding the reader of how Cervantes treats his great Italian predecessor.

'Quoth the Curate,' so Thomas Shelton has englished it, 'there goes among those books, I see, the *Lord Raynald of Montalban*, with his friends and companions, all of them greater thieves than Cacus, and the twelve Peers of France, with the true Historiographer Turpin. I am in truth about

¹ Letter x., Ferrara, July 14, 1512.

² Cf. Rajna, *Le Fonti dell' Orlando Furioso*, p. 42 n. Ariosto's usual way of referring to Boiardo is by some such formula as 'So che tutta l'istoria havete letta' (*Orl. Fur.*, xli. 26), or 'Questa historia non credo che m'accada altrimenti narrar' (xviii. 109).

to condemn them only to exile, for as much as they contain some part of the famous Poet Matthew Boyardo his invention. Out of which the Christian Poet Lodovick Ariosto did likewise weave his work, which if I can find among these, and that he speaks not his own native tongue, I'll use him with no respect, but, if he talk in his own language, I will put him for honour's sake on my head. If that be so, quoth the Barber, I have him at home in the Italian, but cannot understand him. Neither were it good you should understand him, replied the Curate, and here we would willingly have excused the good Captain that translated it into Spanish from that labour, or bringing it into Spain if it had pleased himself. For he hath deprived it of much natural worth in the translation; a fault incident to all those that presume to translate Verses out of one language into another; for though they employ all their industry and wit therein, they can never arrive to the height of that Primitive conceit, which they bring with them in their first birth.'¹

Torquato Tasso held that the two *Orlandos*—Boiardo's *Innamorato* and Ariosto's *Furioso*—should not be considered as two distinct books, but as a single complete poem, begun by the one and brought to an end with greater artistic power by the other poet. This, however, is an error in critical insight. The two poems belong to different categories in art. The one is a chivalrous romance written in verse, the other is a romantic epic. 'The true culminating point in the history of the Italian romance of chivalry,' writes Pio Rajna, 'is represented by the first, rather than by the second *Orlando*. With the poem of the Count of Scandiano ends the natural and spontaneous development of the genus. With the *Furioso*, born of an Italian father, but of a Latin mother, there begins in the stem another branch, which, if it still recognises the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Roman de Tristan* among its ancestors, nevertheless derives a good part of its blood from the *Aeneid*, from the *Metamorphoses*, and from the *Thebaid*.'²

¹ The First Part of the *Historie of Don Quixote*, lib. i. chap. vi. The 'good Captain' referred to is Don Hieronimo de Urrea, a captain not less famous with the sword than with the pen, whose translation was published at Antwerp in 1549.

² *Le Fonti*, p. 39. Cf. the second of Tasso's *Discorsi dell' Arte Poetica*.

The *Furioso* is thus no mere sequel to the *Innamorato*, but an independent poem continuing the matter of the *Innamorato*¹—matter which, for the rest, might almost have been regarded as public property, the romantic *materia poetica* of the age. Nor need we regard the *Furioso* as a poem without a beginning, though the greater part of the events of the *Innamorato* are assumed as known and taken for granted. Although the rivalry of Orlando and Rinaldo for the love of Angelica, from which the action of the *Furioso* proceeds, can be directly connected with Boiardo, yet is Pigna most probably right in tracing this opening of Messer Lodovico's poem by preference to the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles concerning the restitution of Chryseis, in the first book of the *Iliad*. Accepting the fusion of Carolingian and Arthurian legends that Boiardo with such a marvellous faculty of invention had effected, and taking the *Innamorato* as his basis, Ariosto was endeavouring—though without a shadow of pedantry or any too rigid design—to write a poem that should more or less conform to classical models. The first and last lines of the *Furioso* are modifications of lines in the *Divina Commedia*, but they are at the same time hardly more removed from the opening and concluding lines of the *Aeneid*.

Once granted that Orlando might be in love, it would be a perfectly natural sequence of ideas to represent him raving mad. Luigi Pulci, indeed, had seen the Signor of Anglante out of his wits for one brief moment—though not for love. In the *Morgante Maggiore*, Orlando, furious at Charlemagne's blind trust in Gano, leaves Paris in a frenzy of rage and grief. When his wife comes to meet him, the Paladin, *che ismarrito havea il cervello*, raises his sword against her, thinking that she is his enemy:—

‘Come colui che la furia consiglia,
E’ gli pareva a Gan dar veramente.
Alda la bella si fe maraviglia ;
Orlando si ravvide prestamente.’²

¹ *Le Fonti*, pp. 40, 41. Boiardo's poem was continued by Niccolò degli Agostini in three books, of which the first was published at Venice in 1513.

² ‘Like one whom fury counsels, he thought verily to smite Gano. Fair Alda was all astounded; Orlando speedily came to his senses’ (*Morgante Maggiore*, i. 16-18). This curious anticipation of Ariosto was first pointed out by Bonaventura Zumbini, *Studi di Letteratura Italiana*, pp. 306-308.

This, however, is a very different story from the madness of the hero of the *Orlando Furioso*, which Messer Lodovico is perfectly justified in declaring, 'Thing unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.'

The main action of the poem is ostensibly the continuation and completion of the great struggle, already begun in the later cantos of the *Innamorato*, between the powers of Christendom and what the poet represents as Pagandom; the invasion of France by King Agramante of Africa and the Saracen Marsilio of Spain, the siege of Paris, the discomfiture of the invaders, the carrying of the war into Africa, and the final combat of the three against three on the island of Lampedusa. The titular theme, the madness of Orlando, is intimately connected with this. It is when his passion for Angelica has impelled him to break faith with Charlemagne, deserting him at the hour of need when the hosts of Islam are already preparing to invest Paris, that the enemy are able to push on the siege with success. Not until he is healed of his retributory three months' madness can the final triumph of Christendom be assured. But the main thread that runs through the whole is the love of Bradamante and Ruggiero, leading, through much labour, torment of the heart, and external opposition, to the marriage from which the princes of the House of Este are to spring. Panizzi has shown how all the varied ramifications of the poem are connected with this, how all the events of the war and all the minor episodes depend, more or less, upon it. Though the second meeting of the lovers, in Canto iv. of the *Furioso*, does not in any way equal the beauty of their first meeting as Boiardo had pictured it,¹ yet are Ruggiero and Bradamante throughout Ariosto's pages a noble and sympathetic young couple. We need not have recourse to the example of Aeneas and Dido to make allowances for the former's ready yielding to the seductions of Alcina. His conduct in the matter of the liberation of Angelica is certainly less excusable. We grow, however, to like him better and better in the course of the poem, the ennobling influence of Bradamante's love upon his, at first, uncertain character being strongly marked.

¹ *Orlando Innamorato*, III. v. 41-43.

The first immediate consequence of this is the dethronement of Angelica as chief heroine of the poem, and the substitution of Bradamante in her stead.¹ This in itself would necessarily somewhat modify the tone of the second *Orlando*. We find the two already in contrast in the opening canto. Her heart still untouched by love, Angelica listens unmoved to the lamentations of her lover, Sacripante, with cool calculation planning what advantage she can derive to herself from his devotion. She overdoes her pretended confidence in him, and is about to fall a victim to the violence of his passion, when the sudden apparition of Bradamante in her snow-white armour brings the true heroine upon the scenes. Sacripante goes down, horse and man, before her lance—an episode into which it is not hard to read an allegory.

And yet Angelica, heartless coquette though she still is for a while, is incomparably more sympathetic and womanly in Messer Lodovico's cantos than the Count of Scandiano had painted her. The exquisite princess of the Orient finds her soul's salvation at the last, when her heart is moved to pity at the sight of the wounded Medoro, and she, for whose love kings and paladins had striven in vain, becomes the adoring wife of this lowly-born young page of a dead Moorish chieftain. The madness of Orlando, when the whole truth is forced upon him step by step and at length burned into his brain, is no doubt magnificently rendered by the poet, with a sort of Titanic fury; it is an immense advance in psychological insight upon the madness of Tristram in the old Arthurian legend; but, surely, Italian critics are not well advised when they invite us to compare it with the prophetic rage of Lear. There are great possibilities of pathos in the situation where Angelica and Medoro, full of their new-found happiness, and on their way home to her orient kingdom, fall in by chance with the mad Orlando by the Provençal shore. She no longer recognises him in his changed and degraded aspect, nor does he know her; but, instead of the reverential love and faithful guardianship that he had formerly given her, he now turns upon and pursues her with the bestial appetite of a wild

¹ Cf. G. Saintsbury, *The Earlier Renaissance*, p. 131; G. A. Cesareo, *La Fantasia dell' Ariosto* (in the *Nuova Antologia*, November 16, 1900), pp. 291-293.

beast.¹ It is, for the rest, exceedingly characteristic of Ariosto that, while the terror of Orlando's madness is, for the most part, painted in perfect seriousness, and even represented as a direct chastisement from God for his having turned aside from his divinely ordained task of defending the Faith to follow after the lawless love of a Saracen woman,² the ultimate means adopted for the restoration of his lost wits through Astolfo's fantastic journey to the Moon should prove irresistibly comic. Messer Lodovico can be intensely serious at times, and when the occasion demands; but he does not by any means wish us to take him too seriously, or to let him lead us to matters more high than the intention of his poem. It is enough for him to be one of those of whom Keats was to prophesy that they would be 'accounted poet kings.'

Nevertheless, it is exceedingly difficult to understand how it is that a number of writers have taken Ariosto as a less serious poet than Boiardo. To most students of the two *Orlandos*, the contrary seems so obviously the case. No thoughtful Italian of the sixteenth century could hope to recapture the blithe inconsequence of the later Quattrocento. There is more earnest thought in a few cantos of the *Furioso*, though often partly concealed by the poet's reserved nature, than in the whole of the *Innamorato*—noble work in its way though the earlier poem be. That the Comic Spirit has presided over the composition of the *Orlando Furioso* may not be denied, nor that this 'sword of Common Sense,' as the greatest of living novelists has styled it, cuts through many a romantic reputation and high-sounding tale. There are comparatively few cantos in which the poet does not have a laugh with his readers, and very often at their expense. With what boundless zeal and delight he works on through canto after canto, incident after incident, to a magnificently comic situation, can be seen by tracing the various threads that prepare the way and lead up to the crowning triumph of Discord in the Saracen camp.³ Throughout the poem, earnestness and irony are inimitably blended together; the Comic Muse is afraid, it would seem, to trust her Tragic sister too far out of her sight.

¹ *Orlando Furioso*, xxix. 58-61.

² *Ibid.*, xxxiv. 62-66.

³ *Ibid.*, xxvii. 35, *et seq.*

But Messer Lodovico does not laugh at chivalry—save in the same way that, at times, he seems to laugh at Christianity and at himself. He can get endless fun out of the absurd exaggerations and preposterous achievements of the old chansons and romances, and easily beats them on their own ground by the fantastic feats of prowess that he invents out of his own head for his Paladins, and ascribes to the much-enduring authority of Turpin. Now and then, though rarely, this tends to sink to mere buffoonery—as in the preposterous fight with Orrilo in Canto xv. But, after all, the chivalrous world of knights and ladies seems to him a very goodly and beautiful world, far more worthy of admiration than the sixteenth century itself. He is quite in earnest in his prolonged denunciation of the invention of gunpowder and artillery that had finally swept away the old order of knighthood in smoke and flame.¹ In that age so full of treachery, deceit, and self-seeking, his sigh for the *gran bontà de' cavalieri antichi* at the outset of the poem comes from his very heart. All his most bitter satire is reserved for his own contemporaries.

‘Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori,
Le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto’ :—

‘I sing of women and knights, arms and loves, courtesies and daring deeds.’ Thus at the beginning of the poem does Ariosto define his subject. The daring deeds are at times fantastic, the courtesies may seem to our modern taste far-fetched, the loves somewhat too ‘nude and antique’ for our sensibilities; but the knights and ladies are living beings, no mere puppets, but characters of flesh and blood moving in an atmosphere of poetic wonderland, into which an occasional trumpet sounds from the world of reality, not to dissipate it, but to add to our enjoyment and interest a quickening sense of the tremendous times in which their creator was writing. The *Orlando Furioso* is, indeed, in many respects a mirror held up to the swiftly passing society of the Cinquecento.

As the opening line implies, women occupy the foremost places in the poem. In spite of his famous satire on marriage, Messer Lodovico strenuously protests himself an ardent

¹ *Orlando Furioso*, xi. 22-28.

admirer and zealous champion of the fair sex. Rodomonte, he declares, is entirely wrong in blaming all women indiscriminately:—

‘ Con queste et altre et infinite appresso
Querele, il Re di Sarza se ne giva,
Hor ragionando in un parlar sommesso,
Quando in un suon che di lontan s’udiva,
In onta e in biasmo del femineo sesso.
E certo da ragion si dipartiva,
Chè, per una o per due che trovi ree,
Che cento buone sien creder si dee.

‘ Se ben di quante io n’ habbia fin qui amate,
Non n’ habbia mai trovata una fedele ;
Perfide tutte io non vo’ dir nè ingrata,
Ma darne colpa al mio destin crudele.
Molte hor ne sono, e più già ne son state,
Che non dan causa ad huom che si querele ;
Ma mia fortuna vuol che, s’ una ria
Ne sia tra cento, io di lei preda sia.

‘ Pur vo’ tanto cercar prima ch’ io mora,
Anzi prima che ’l crin più mi s’imbianchi,
Che forse dirò un dì, che per me anchora
Alcuna sia che di sua fè non manchi.
Se questo avvien (chè di speranza fuora
Io non ne son), non fia mai ch’ io mi stanchi
Di farla a mia possanza gloriosa
Con lingua e con inchiostro, e in verso e in prosa.’¹

The cynical and shameless novella put upon the lips of

¹ ‘ With these and countless other complaints, the King of Sarza went on, now discoursing in a low voice, now in a tone that was heard far off, casting shame and abuse on the feminine sex. And, certes, he departed from reason ; for, for one or for two that you find bad, we must believe that there are a hundred good.

‘ Albeit out of all those I have loved up to now, I have never found one faithful, I would not call them all treacherous nor ungrateful, but lay the blame upon my cruel fate. Many of them there are, and more have been of old, who give no cause to a man for complaint ; but my fortune wills that, if among a hundred there be one bad, I should fall her prey.

‘ Still I would fain search before I die—nay, before my hair becomes more white—until perchance some day I shall say that, even for me, there is one who does not break her troth. If this happens (for I am not out of hope thereof), never shall I weary of making her glorious as best I can, with tongue and with ink, both in verse and prose’ (*Orl. Fur.*, xxvii. 122-124).

The third stanza is not in the edition of 1516, but was added by the poet, in honour of Alessandra, in that of 1532.

mine host of the inn is, indeed, introduced with a half humorous excuse and apology:—

'Donne, e voi che le donne havete in pregio,
Per Dio non date a questa historia orecchia,
A questa che l' hostier dire in dispregio
E in vostra infamia e biasmo s' apparecchia;
Ben che nè macchia vi può dar nè fregio
Lingua sì vile; e sia l' usanza vecchia,
Che 'l volgare ignorante ognun riprenda,
E parli più di quel che meno intenda.

'Lasciate questo canto, chè senza esso
Può star l' historia, e non sarà men chiara.
Mettendolo Turpino, anch' io l' ho messo,
Non per malivolentia nè per gara.
Ch' io v' ami, oltre mia lingua che l' ha espresso,
Che mai non fu di celebrarvi avara,
N' ho fatto mille prove, e v' ho dimostro
Ch' io son nè potrei esser se non vostro.'¹

But the reasonable retort and answer to the story given by the *sincero e giusto vecchio* is quite obviously Ariosto's own conviction, and the poet drives home his belief in the following canto, by the self-immolation of Isabella in defence of her chastity beneath the sword of the drunken Rodomonte:—

'Vattene in pace, alma beata e bella.
Così i miei versi havesson forza, come
Ben m' affaticherei con tutta quella
Arte che tanto il parlar orna e come,
Perchè, mille e mill' anni e più, novella
Sentisse il mondo del tuo chiaro nome.
Vattene in pace alla superna sede,
E lascia all' altre esempio di tua fede.'²

¹ 'Ladies (and ye that hold ladies in esteem), for God's sake lend not ear to this story that the host is preparing to tell for your disparagement and disgrace and blame; albeit a tongue so vile can give you neither stain nor honour; and let the old usage be, that the vulgar clown abuse every one and speak most of what he least understands.

'Let this canto alone; for the history can stand without it, and will not be less clear. As Turpin sets it down, I too have done so, not for illwill nor to raise strife. That I love you, besides my tongue that has expressed it, which was never niggardly in your praises, I have given a thousand proofs, and I have shown you that I am, nor ever could be other than, yours' (*Orl. Fur.*, xxviii. 1-2).

² 'Depart in peace, blessed and beauteous soul. Would that my lines had power, even as I should labour with all the art that so decks and adorns our speech, that for thousands of years and more the world should hear tidings of thy famous name. Depart in peace to the realms on high, and leave to the others the example of thy fidelity' (*Orl. Fur.*, xxix. 27).

In fact, Ariosto's whole attitude towards women is far higher and more serious than had been Boiardo's. I have already spoken of the change in the character of Angelica: the Count of Scandiano had discovered her, but it was left to Messer Lodovico to give her a soul. Bradamante, a maiden warrior though no mere virago, is as pure and steadfast as our Spenser's own Britomart, but incomparably more human and lovable. The contrast between her and Ruggiero's sister Marfisa, a veritable Amazon even as Boiardo had left her, is exceedingly well indicated throughout. Fiordiligi, the beloved of Brandimarte, after the heroic death of her lover in the great combat of the three champions of Christendom against the three pagan kings, leaves the world to end her days in a convent.

Even Doralice has gracious features in her character. But to outweigh Gabrina, Fiammetta, Lidia, and their kind, Ariosto introduces not only the girl heroine and martyr, Isabella (she is only sixteen years old), but other noble figures such as Dan Chaucer might have hymned in his *Legend of Good Women*: Ginevra and Olimpia. Ginevra, the prototype of Shakespeare's Hero, has an incomparably more worthy lover in Ariodante than the wretched Claudio of *Much Ado About Nothing*. The treacherous device by which she is made to appear false in Ariodante's eyes, and condemned to a shameful death, was doubtless suggested by an episode in *Tirant lo Blanch*, that Catalonian romance of Johanot Martorell in which Don Quixote's Curate made account to have found 'a treasure of delight and a copious mine of pastime'; but Rajna has pointed out that Ariosto has to a large extent purified the story and characteristically altered it in one essential respect, in as much as the treacherous stratagem with its odious motive is no longer the fruit of a woman's jealousy as in the old romance, but—even as afterwards in Shakespeare—the work of a man.¹ In creating his Olimpia, Ariosto obviously drew much from

¹ *Le Fonti*, pp. 150-153. Cf. Dunlop, *History of Fiction* (3rd edition, 1845), p. 169. The same episode from *Tirant lo Blanch* is the subject of the ninth novella in the Introduction to Giraldi's *Ecatommithi*. Martorell's romance, which was highly prized by Isabella d'Este, was translated into Italian by Lelio Manfredi of Ferrara: *Tirante il Bianco valorosissimo cavaliere. Di lingua Spagnola nello idioma nostro per Messer Lelio di Manfredi tradotto*. In Vinegia. 1538.

the Ariadne of Catullus and Ovid ; but the result is an even more striking figure than Ginevra. Pure and beautiful, clothed round with tragedy, Olimpia does not shrink from keeping faith to her lover, and avenging the deaths of her kindred, by staining her own hands with the blood of the husband that her impious conqueror is forcing upon her.¹ For the same lover she sacrifices all she has, and is about to surrender herself to a death of torment—only to be repaid with the blackest treachery and ingratitude. Her final deliverance from the Orca by Orlando gives Ariosto an opportunity to paint a more matured version of his picture of the liberation of Angelica from the same position by Ruggiero, analogous to the 'Perseus and Andromeda' so loved by artists of the Renaissance—a scene which Messer Lodovico naturally saw with the eyes of Titian rather than with those of Ingres. The more finished and elaborated replica is, on the whole, the finer of the two, and the incomparably nobler and more self-restrained bearing of Orlando than Ruggiero's had been in the same delicate situation well befits the champion of the Church.

The stories of Ginevra and Olimpia are among the most admirable portions of the poem. And, when the poet turns from these creatures of romance to extol the noble dames of his own day, his most enthusiastic praise and evidently sincerest admiration are bestowed, hardly less than upon Isabella d'Este, upon one in honouring whom there could surely be no trace of adulation or self-seeking—the saintly Vittoria Colonna.

Figures of another kind are the purely allegorical female types—the Fays, Alcina and Logistilla. The latter, who apparently represents Reason, is—as not unfrequently befalls her in poetry—somewhat lacking in interest. Alcina, however, more formidable than Spenser's Acrasia, is one of those gorgeous enchantresses that filled the part of Circe for the poets of the Renaissance ; nor would it be unprofitable to work out how much that acknowledged masterpiece of Ferrarese pictorial art, the 'Circe' of Dosso Dossi, owes to her rather than to her Homeric prototype. Yet, to our northern minds,

¹ Her slaying of Arbante (*Orl. Fur.*, ix. 41) curiously resembles the murder of Galeotto Manfredi by Francesca Bentivoglio as narrated by Machiavelli.

these bizarre creations of Italian phantasy lack the tragic dreadfulness of Morgan le Fay, the Fata Morgana of Arthurian legend, at the bedside of her husband, King Uriens: 'Anon the damosel brought Morgan the sword with quaking hands, and she lightly took the sword and pulled it out, and went boldly unto the bed's side, and awaited how and where she might slay him best. And as she lifted up the sword to smite, Sir Uwaine leapt unto his mother and caught her by the hand, and said: Ah, fiend, what wilt thou do? An thou wert not my mother, with this sword I should smite off thy head. Ah, said Sir Uwaine, men saith that Merlin was begotten of a devil, but I may say an earthly devil bare me.'¹

Love sways the hosts of the enemy no less than he disturbs the camp of the faithful. Doralice can set the two most redoubtable champions of Islam, Rodomonte and Mandricardo, at each other's throats, even as Angelica has thrown the apple of discord between Rinaldo and Orlando. The golden thread of the romantic loves of Ruggiero and Bradamante connects all the seemingly scattered episodes of the poem. A tenderer note is struck in the love of Zerbino for Isabella, of Brandimarte for Fiordiligi—love cast down by death, but living beyond the tomb.

It has been well observed that we grow to realise the complete nobleness of Orlando's character—in spite of his charmed life and his more than Samsonian slaughterings of unbelievers—by the feelings he excites in all who are brought into contact with him.² He inspires absolute confidence in women, boundless devotion in men. Brandimarte (whose character, for the rest, had already been admirably rendered by Boiardo) falls fighting by his side, his devoted companion to the end. There is an epic solemnity in Orlando's bearing at his bier, well corresponding to the character of the hero:—

' Orlando, fatto al corpo più vicino,
Senza parlar stette a mirarlo alquanto,
Pallido come colto al matutino
È da sera il ligustro o il molle acantho ;
E dopo un gran sospir, tenendo fisse
Sempre le luci in lui, così gli disse :

¹ Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, book iv. chap. xiii.

² Cf. Zumbini, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

'O forte, o caro, o mio fedel compagno,
 Che qui sei morto, e so che vivi in cielo,
 E d' una vita v' hai fatto guadagno
 Che non ti può mai tor caldo nè gielo :
 Perdonami, se ben vedi ch' io piagno ;
 Perchè d'esser rimaso mi querelo,
 E ch' a tanta letitia io non son teco ;
 Non già perchè qua giù tu non sia meco.

'Solo senza te son ; nè cosa in terra
 Senza te posso haver più che mi piaccia.
 Se teco era in tempesta, e teco in guerra,
 Perchè non ancho in otio et in bonaccia ?
 Ben grande è 'l mio fallir, poi che mi serra
 Di questo fango uscir per la tua traccia.
 Se ne gli affanni teco fui, perc' hora
 Non sono a parte del guadagno anchora ?

'Tu guadagnato, e perdita ho fatto io ;
 Sol tu all' acquisto, io non son solo al danno.
 Partecipe fatto è del dolor mio
 L'Italia, il regno Franco, e l'Alemanno.
 O quanto quanto il mio Signore e Zio,
 O quanto i Paladin da doler s' hanno ;
 Quanto l'Imperio, e la Christiana Chiesa,
 Che perduto han la sua maggior difesa !

'O quanto si torrà per la tua morte
 Di terrore a' nimici e di spavento !
 O quanto Paganìa sarà più forte,
 Quanto animo n' havrà, quanto ardimento !
 O come star ne dee la tua consorte ?
 Sin qui ne veggo il pianto e 'l grido sento ;
 So che m' accusa ; e forse odio mi porta,
 Chè per me teco ogni sua speme è morta.

'Ma, Fiordiligi, al men resti un conforto
 A noi che sian di Brandimarte privi ;
 Ch' invidiar lui con tanta gloria morto
 Denno tutti i guerrier c' hoggi son vivi.
 Quei Decii, e quel nel Roman Foro absorto,
 Quel sì lodato Codro da gli Argivi,
 Non con più altrui profitto e più suo honore
 A morte si donar, del tuo Signore.'¹

¹ 'Orlando, coming nearer the body, without speaking stood a while gazing upon it, pale as the privet culled at morn is at eve or the supple acanthus, and after a deep sigh, still keeping his eyes fixed upon it, he addressed it thus :

“O my brave, dear, faithful comrade, that here art dead, and I know

Zerbino, the brother of Ginevra and lover of Isabella, the most beautiful and pathetic male character in the poem, and who is evidently little more than a boy, dies in defence of Orlando's sword. Mortally wounded in single combat by Mandricardo, he breathes out his last in the arms of his beloved :—

‘ A questo la mestissima Isabella,
Declinando la faccia lachrymosa,
E congiungendo la sua bocca a quella
Di Zerbin, languidetta come rosa,
Rosa non colta in sua stagion, sì ch' ella
Impallidisca in su la siepe ombrosa,
Disse : Non vi pensate già, mia vita,
Far senza me quest' ultima partita.

‘ Di ciò, cor mio, nessun timor vi tocchi ;
Ch' io vo' seguirvi o in cielo o ne lo 'nferno.
Convien che l' uno e l' altro spiro scocchi,
Insieme vada, insieme stia in eterno :
Non sì tosto vedrò chiudervi gli occhi,
O che m' ucciderà il dolore interno,
O se quel non può tanto, io vi prometto
Con questa spada hoggi passarmi il petto.

‘ De' corpi nostri ho anchor non poca speme,
Che me' morti che vivi habbian ventura.
Qui forse alcun capiterà, ch' insieme,
Mosso a pietà, darà lor sepoltura.

livest in heaven, and hast won a life there that no change can ever take from thee ; pardon me, albeit thou seest I weep ; for I lament that I am left behind and am not with thee in such great bliss ; not, indeed, that thou art not with me here below.

“ I am alone without thee ; nought can I have more on earth without thee to please me. If I was with thee in tempest and with thee in war, why not still in peace and in calm ? Great indeed is my fault, since it forbids me go forth from this mire in thy track. If I was with thee in thy toils, why now share I not in the gain likewise ?

“ Thou hast gained and I have lost ; thou art alone in winning, not I alone in loss. Italy, the Frankish realm and the German are made partakers of my grief. How much, how much my Lord and Uncle, how much cause for mourning have the Paladins ; how much the Empire and the Christian Church, which have lost their greatest defence !

“ O how much terror and dread will be lifted from the enemy by thy death ! O how much stronger Pagandom will be, how much more courage and daring will it have therefrom ! O what must be thy consort's plight ? Even here I see her tears and hear her cries. I know she accuses me, and perchance bears me hate, for, for me, all her hope is dead with thee.

“ But, Fiordiligi, let at least one comfort remain to us who have lost Brandimarte. All warriors that live to-day must envy him dead with such glory. Those Decii and he who was engulfed in the Roman Forum, that Codrus so extolled by the Greeks, did not yield themselves to death with more weal to others and more honour to themselves, than thy Lord ” (*Orlando Furioso*, xliii. 169-174).

Così dicendo, le reliquie estreme
De lo spinto vital che morte fura
Va ricogliendo con le labra meste,
Fin ch' una minima aura ve ne reste.

'Zerbin, la debil voce rifezando,
Disse : Io vi priego e supplico, mia Diva,
Per quello amor che mi mostraste, quando
Per me lasciaste la paterna riva ;
E se comandar posso, io ve 'l commando,
Che, fin che piaccia a Dio, restiate viva ;
Nè mai per caso pogniate in oblio,
Che, quanto amar si può, v' habbia amato io.'¹

It is again characteristic of Ariosto that, even in the death of Isabella in Canto xxix., the previous comic disappearance of the sincerely pious, but imprudently garrulous monk from the scenes and the subsequent flattery of the Marchesana of Mantua prevent a purely tragic note being struck.

To this principle, indeed, Messer Lodovico steadily adheres throughout the poem. Gaspari has well noted how the part played by Astolfo, not only in restoring his senses to Orlando, but in effectuating the ultimate triumph of the cause of Christendom by means of his miraculously obtained cavalry and ships, throws a comic light upon the main action of the story. The English paladin is not quite so delightfully irresponsible and irresistibly funny as he was in Boiardo's pages; but he is still enough of a heroical buffoon to render his appearance as the saviour of Messer Lodovico's chivalrous

¹ 'At this the most mournful Isabella, bending down her tear-stained face, joining her mouth to Zerbin's, that was fading like a rose, a rose not gathered in its season so that it grows pale upon the leafy hedge, said : "Think not indeed, my life, to make this last journey without me.

"Let no fear of that touch you, my heart; for I will follow you, or in heaven or in hell. Needs must one spirit and the other fare forth, go together, be together in eternity. No sooner shall I see your eyes close, than my own sorrow will slay me, or, if it cannot so much, I promise you that with this sword to-day I pierce my breast.

"For our bodies I have still no small hope that they may have better fortune dead than living. Perchance some one will come hither who, moved to pity, will give them burial together." So saying, she gathers up the last remains of the vital spirit that Death steals, with her sad lips, so long as a least breath thereof abides.

'Zerbin, strengthening his weak voice, said : "I pray and beseech you, my Goddess, by that love that you showed me when for me you left your father's shore; and, if I can command, I command you, to remain alive as long as shall please God, nor ever, hap what may, fail to remember that, as much as man can love, I have loved you"' (*Orlando Furioso*, xxiv. 80-83).

society in thorough harmony with the promptings of the satiric Muse. Astolfo's voyage to the other world, in Canto xxxiv., is rightly regarded as one of Ariosto's triumphs in this kind. It is, indeed, merely the surface of the *vite spiritali* that Astolfo penetrates, or seems to have any desire to investigate—and this, surely, is infinitely suggestive of the whole attitude of the poet. The story of Lidia (which in itself is told in perfect seriousness and by no means without ethical significance) bears much the same relation to Dante's eternal ruin of Francesca da Rimini as the famous novella of Nastagio degli Onesti in the *Decameron* does to Fra Jacopo Passavanti's grim example of the punishment of lawless love.¹ The Earthly Paradise shows us a Dantesque conception materialised with ironical intent. But the Realm of the Moon—in which Ariosto has taken hints from the *Stultitiae Laus* of Erasmus, and given more to Milton for the 'Paradise of Fools' in Book III. of *Paradise Lost*—is a masterpiece of satirical imagination.² Here in a secluded valley are all the things lost on earth. Wonderful, indeed, is the catalogue that follows, beginning with the fame that time is devouring upon earth and the unaccepted prayers and vows, ranging from the tears and sighs of lovers to the vast emperies of antiquity seen now as a heap of blown-out bladders, full still of the echoes of mighty tumults of old. Verses written in praise of princes have here the appearance of burst cicalas—but Messer Lodovico is quite ready to turn to the most extravagant adulation of Ippolito that he had ever perpetrated. Through all this St. John guides Astolfo, pointing out, apparently with satisfaction, the heap of refuse ('sown once for food but trodden into clay,' as our modern poet has it) formed of alms left to be given after death, and to the mountain of flowers that once had a good odour, but now smells vilely: 'This was

¹ Cf. *Decameron*, v. 8, and *Lo Specchio della Vera Penitenzia*, dist. iii. cap. 2. Lidia is essentially an impenitent version of the daughter of the King of Northumberland in the old romance of *Gyron le Courtois*, with features derived from Anaxarete in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Rajna, *op. cit.*, pp. 537-541; Bolza, *Manuale Ariostesco*, p. xxxvii). The more romantic version of the story of Albiera and her lover, Febo, is told before Ariosto in the early Tuscan poem entitled *Il Febusso e Breusso* (edited by Lord Vernon, Florence, 1847), and after him by Luigi Alamanni, *Gyrone il Cortese*, lib. xii.-xiv.

² For the influence of Erasmus, cf. Zumbini, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-347.

the gift (if it be lawful to say so) that Constantine made the good Silvester.' All human contingencies are there—save only madness which never leaves the earth—while, as to Wisdom, it forms a mountain far exceeding all the rest. Here are lost wits collected in vessels of greater or less size—the largest holding those of Orlando. Astolfo finds a large part of his own there, but is still more astonished at discovering those of many others whom he had deemed as sane as himself.

The allegory of Time and the Fates, that follows, is in a more conventional vein; but the poet's grim picture of Lethe, with its foul birds of prey in flocks and its few white swans, becomes satire of a powerful kind—touching, indeed, one would have thought, his courtly readers too closely to have been altogether acceptable. But, at the end, the Apostle's warning to princes not to neglect the poets becomes a genial, if somewhat prolonged joke:—

'Non sì pietoso Enea, nè forte Achille
Fu come è fama, nè sì fiero Hettorre;
E ne son stati e mille e mille e mille
Che lor si puon con verità anteporre;
Ma i donati palazzi e le gran ville
Da i descendenti lor, gli ha fatto porre
In questi senza fin sublimi honori
Da l' honorate man de gli scrittori.

'Non fu sì santo nè benigno Augusto,
Come la tuba di Virgilio suona;
L' haver havuto in Poesia buon gusto
La proscrittion iniqua gli perdona.
Nessun sapria se Neron fosse ingiusto,
Nè sua fama saria forse men buona;
Havesse havuto e terra e ciel nimici,
Se gli scrittor sapea tenersi amici.

'Homero Agamemnon vittorioso,
E fe i Troian parer vili et inertì;
E che Penelopea, fida al suo sposo,
Da i Prochi mille oltraggi havea sofferti.
E se tu vuoi che 'l ver non ti sia ascoso,
Tutta al contrario l' historia converti;
Che i Greci rotti, e che Troia vittrice,
E che Penelopea fu meretrice.

'Da l' altra parte odi che fama lascia
 Elissa, c' hebbe il cor tanto pudico ;
 Che riputata viene una bagascia,
 Solo perchè Maron non le fu amico.
 Non ti maravigliar ch' io n' habbia ambascia,
 E se di ciò diffusamente io dico.
 Gli scrittori amo, e fo il debito mio ;
 Ch' al vostro mondo fui scrittore anch' io.'¹

Giraldi remarks upon the admirable character of the preludes with which Ariosto usually opens his cantos—though some, he says, blame him for them. He suggests that the Italians of the Renaissance may have adopted this fashion in imitation of the elegies and prefaces of Claudian. But it was a device well known to the popular romantic poetry of an earlier time, and had been used to excellent effect by Boiardo, who probably actually read his poem, canto by canto, as he proceeded. Ariosto brought these preludes to the cantos to the highest pitch of artistic perfection. At times, they suggest to an English reader analogies with the 'initial essays' prefixed to the several books of Fielding's *Tom Jones*. They connect what has gone before with what is to follow, strike the keynote of the canto, and serve as a vehicle for the expression of the poet's worldly wisdom, his ethical or political faith. The longest, however, that prefixed to the last canto, is surely unique of its kind ; finding himself

¹ 'Not so pious was Aeneas, nor so strong Achilles, nor Hector so brave as fame reports. There have been many thousands that can with truth be placed above them. But the palaces and the great estates given by their descendants have made them raised to these endless sublime honours by the honoured hands of authors.

'Augustus was not so holy nor benign as the trumpet of Virgil proclaims ; his having had good taste in poetry pardons him the iniquitous proscription. No one would know if Nero was unjust, nor would his reputation, perchance, be less good ; he might have had both earth and heaven as foes, if he had known how to keep authors his friends.

'Homer made Agamemnon victorious, and the Trojans seem cowardly and inert, and said that Penelope, faithful to her spouse, suffered a thousand insults from the suitors. But, if thou wouldst have the truth not hidden from thee, turn the story all the other way about ; for the Greeks were routed, Troy was victorious, and Penelope was a thing of naught.

'On the other side, hear what fame Dido leaves, who kept her heart so pure ; she is reputed a wanton, solely because Maro was not her friend. Do not marvel that I feel this keenly, and that I speak at length on the subject. I love authors, and do my duty ; for I, too, was an author in your world' (*Orl. Fur.*, xxxv. 25-28).

approaching the end of his labour is to the poet like bringing his ship to shore after a long voyage, to find both sides of the harbour lined with all the lovely ladies, all the men of letters of his acquaintance to welcome him, while the bells and trumpets of the town peal out their loving congratulations. I have heard these nineteen stanzas described as a mere string of names of the illustrious obscure; to me, it is quite one of the most charming and cheering things in literature.

More striking, however, reading almost like a latter-day echo of Savonarola, is the prelude to Canto xvii., where the prostration of Italy beneath the feet of the barbarian invaders is laid to the account of the sins of the whole nation, and a curious promise given of a *revanche* :—

‘ Il giusto Dio, quando i peccati nostri
Hanno di remission passato il segno,
Acciò che la giustitia sua dimostri
Uguale alla pietà, spesso da regno
A Tyranni atrocissimi et a Mostri,
E da lor forza e di mal fare ingegno :
Per questo Mario e Sylla pose al mondo,
E duo Neroni, e Caio furibondo,

‘ Domitiano, e l’ ultimo Antonino ;
E tolse da la immonda e bassa plebe
Et esaltò all’ Imperio Massimino ;
E nascere prima fe Creonte a Thebe ;
E diè Mezentio al populo Agilino,
Che fe di sangue human grasse le glebe ;
E diede Italia a tempi men remoti
In preda agli Hunni, a i Longobardi, a i Gothi.

‘ Che d’ Atila dirò ? che de l’ iniquo
Ezzellin da Roman ? che d’ altri cento,
Che, dopo un lungo andar sempre in obliquo,
Ne manda Dio per pena e per tormento ?
Di questo habbian non pur al tempo antiquo,
Ma anchora al nostro, chiaro esperimento,
Quando a noi, greggi inutili e mal nati,
Ha dato per guardian Lupi arrabbiati ;

‘ A cui non par c’ habbi’ a bastar lor fame,
C’ habbi’ il lor ventre a capir tanta carne ;
E chiaman Lupi di più ingorde brame
Da boschi oltramontani a divorarne.

Di Trasimeno l' insepulto ossame,
 E di Canne e di Trebia, poco parne
 Verso quel che le ripe e i campi ingrassa,
 Dov' Adda e Mella e Ronco e Tarro passa.

' Hor Dio consente che noi sian puniti
 Da populi di noi forse peggiori,
 Per li multiplicati et infiniti
 Nostri nefandi, obbrobriosi errori.
 Tempo verrà ch' a depredar lor liti
 Andremo noi, se mai saren migliori,
 E che i peccati lor giungano al segno
 Che l' eterna Bontà muovano a sdegno.'¹

This passage—which the godson of Queen Elizabeth assures us is one 'that would beseem any pulpit'—is justly famous. But still finer—veritably Dantesque in spirit, with echoes of Petrarca and even, strangely (and doubtless unconsciously), of St. Catherine of Siena—is the superb outcry a few stanzas lower against all Italy's invaders alike, Frenchman and Spaniard, Swiss and German. The holy place 'where God Almighty dwelt in flesh' is left by proud and wretched Christians in the hands of dogs:—

¹ 'Just God, when our sins have passed the mark of pardon, in order to show His justice equal to His mercy, often gives sway to most atrocious tyrants and to monsters, and gives them power and capacity for doing evil; for this He placed Marius and Sulla in the world, and two Neros, and mad Caligula,

' Domitian and the last Antoninus; and took Maximinus from the lowest of the people and exalted him to the Empire; and, before that, He made Creon born at Thebes, and to the people of Agylla gave Mezentius, who made the lands fat with human blood; and He has given Italy in times less remote in prey to Huns, to Lombards, to the Goths.

'What shall I say of Attila? What of the iniquitous Ezzellino da Romano? What of a hundred others, whom, after a long wandering in crooked ways, God sends us for punishment and torment? Of this we have manifest experience not only in olden time, but also in our own, when to us, useless and hapless flocks, He has given raging wolves for guardians.

'To them it seems not that their own hunger will suffice, nor that their own maw can hold so much flesh; and they summon wolves of more insatiate greed from woods beyond the mountains to devour us. The unburied bones at Trasimene and at Cannae and by the Trebbia seem little compared with what fattens the banks and fields where Adda and Mella, Ronco and Taro flow.

'Now God consents that we be punished by nations perchance worse than us, for our multiplied and infinite, shameless and shameful errors. A time will come when we shall go forth to plunder their shores, if ever we be better, when their sins reach the bounds and move the eternal Goodness to wrath' (*Orl. Fur.*, xvii. 1-5).

‘Dove abbassar dovrebbero la lancia
In augumento de la santa Fede,
Tra lor si dan nel petto e ne la pancia,
A destrution del poco che si crede.
Voi, gente Hispana, e voi, gente di Francia,
Volgete altrove, e voi, Svizeri, il piede,
E voi, Tedeschi, a far più degno acquisto ;
Chè quanto qui cercate è già di Christo.

‘Se Christianissimi esser voi volete,
E voi altri Catholici nomati,
Perchè di Christo gli huomini uccidete
Perchè de’ beni lor son dispogliati ?
Perchè Hierusalem non rihavete,
Che tolto è stato a voi da’ rinegati ?
Perchè Constantinopoli e del mondo
La miglior parte occupa il Turco immondo ?

‘Non hai tu, Spagna, l’Africa vicina,
Che t’ ha via più di questa Italia offesa ?
E pur, per dar travaglio alla meschina,
Lasci la prima tua sì bella impresa.
O d’ ogni vitio fetida sentina,
Dormi, Italia imbriaça, e non ti pesa
C’ hora di questa gente, hora di quella,
Che già serva ti fu, sei fatta ancella ?

‘Se ’l dubbio di morir ne le tue tane,
Svizer, di fame, in Lombardia ti guida,
E tra noi cerchi, o chi ti dia del pane,
O per uscir d’ inopia chi t’ uccida ;
Le ricchezze del Turco hai non lontane ;
Caccial d’ Europa, o almen di Grecia snida.
Così potrai o del digiuno trarti,
O cader con più merto in quelle parti.

‘Quel ch’ a te dico, io dico al tuo vicino
Tedesco anchor : là le ricchezze sono,
Che vi portò da Roma Constantino ;
Portonne il meglio, e fe del resto dono.
Pactolo et Hermo, onde si tra l’or fino,
Migdonia e Lydia, e quel paese buono
Per tante laudi in tante historie noto,
Non è, s’ andar vi vuoi, troppo remoto.

‘Tu, gran Leone, a cui premon le terga
De le chiavi del ciel le gravi some,
Non lasciar che nel sonno si sommerga
Italia, se la man l’ hai ne le chiome.

Tu sei Pastore, e Dio t' ha quella verga
 Data a portare, e scelto il fiero nome,
 Perchè tu ruggi, e che le braccia stenda
 Sì che da i lupi il grege tuo difenda.¹

It could not be expected of Ariosto that he should take an independent line in politics in his poem; nor does he do so. The most that can be said is that he panders rather less to the political tendencies of his patrons than might have been anticipated. Even in the earlier edition of the poem, when Alfonso of Ferrara was closely bound to the alliance with France, the foreigner is the foreigner still, be he French or German or Spaniard. The poet sees Italy as a nation, in the same vague, uncertain way as that in which Machiavelli saw her, and he believes in her future. But the shadow of the Holy Roman Empire falls upon him, even as it lay over Dante's political conception. Even as he had believed (or professed to believe) in Leo x., so now he believes (or professes to believe) in Charles v.² A not inexcusable lapse,

¹ 'Where they should lay lance in rest in support of the holy Faith, they smite each other in breast and paunch, to the destruction of the little that is believed. You, folk of Spain, and you, folk of France, and you, Switzers, turn your feet elsewhere, and you, Germans, to make worthier conquest; for all you seek here is already Christ's.'

'If you would be called *Most Christian* and you others *Catholic*, why do you slay the men of Christ? Why are they despoiled of their goods? Why win ye not back Jerusalem that has been taken from you by renegades? Why does the unclean Turk possess Constantinople and the better part of the world?

'Hast thou not, Spain, Africa at hand, which has offended thee far more than this Italy? And yet, to torment the unhappy land, thou leavest thy first enterprise so fair. O fetid sink of every vice, dost sleep, drunken Italy, and carest thou not that now of this nation, now of that, which was of old thy slave, thou art become a servant?

'If the fear of dying of hunger in thy dens, Switzer, brings thee into Lombardy, and among us thou seekest who shall give thee bread or, to escape from need, who shall slay thee; thou hast the riches of the Turk not far away; hunt him from Europe or at least dislodge from Greece. So shalt thou either draw thyself from hunger or fall with more merit in those regions.

'What I say to thee, I say to thy German neighbour too. There are the riches that Constantine brought from Rome; the best he brought away and made gift of the rest. Pactolus and Hermus, whence fine gold is drawn, Phrygia and Lydia, and that good country famous by countless praise in countless histories, are not, if thou wouldst go there, too remote.

'Thou, great Leo, upon whose shoulders weighs the heavy burden of the keys of Heaven, suffer not Italy to be submerged in sleep, if thou hast thy hand in her hair. Thou art our Shepherd; God hath given thee that staff to bear and chosen thy fierce name, that thou may'st roar, and stretch forth thy arms to defend thy flock from the wolves' (*Orl. Fur.*, xvii. 74-79).

² Cf. above, Chapter x. pp. 256, 257.

perhaps, in a Ferrarese, when we remember that it was practically the unexpected display of impartial justice in this latest 'saviour of society' that delivered Ferrara from being absorbed into the Papal States some seventy years before her time.

It must be frankly admitted that the adulation, at times outrageous and shameless, that finds expression in so many passages of the *Orlando Furioso* is a blot upon the beauty of the poem and upon the character of the author. And, indeed it is so flagrant and so officiously done, that we are irresistibly reminded of the ingenuously satirical picture ascribed to Dosso Dossi in the National Gallery of London, of the Muse inspiring a Ferrarese Court poet. Gaspari, however, puts it to Ariosto's credit that these adulatory passages are usually the least successful portions of the poem, and sometimes are only explicable on the theory that they are deliberately tinged with irony. The immorality of the *Furioso* on other grounds has, as is now generally agreed, been much exaggerated. Without going so far as Messer Lodovico's first English translator, Sir John Harington, who commits himself to the declaration 'that in all Ariosto there is not a word of ribaldry or obscenousness,' it is clear, I think, that the poet was purer than his age. That he put a low value upon the angelical virtue must be conceded—it should be realised that, in the martyrdom of Isabella, it is her fidelity to the memory of Zerbino that the poet chiefly admires—but he seldom, if ever, as far as his greatest poem is concerned, revels in obscenity for its own sake. Certain passages and episodes do, however, far pass the bounds of what is tolerable, and Harington's defence of the author in this respect savours unpleasantly of hypocrisy: 'Read them as my author meant them, to breed detestation and not delectation: remember, when you read of the old lecherous Friar, that a fornicator is one of the things that God hateth. When you read of Alcina, think how Joseph fled from his enticing mistress; when you light on Anselmus's tale, learn to loathe beastly covetousness, when on Richardetto, know that sweet meat will have sour sauce; when on mine host's tale (if you will follow my counsel), turn over the leaf and let it alone, although even that lewd tale may bring some men profit.'

There is some reason for believing that Ariosto repented of this aspect of his work during his last illness. In the *Annotationi et Avvertimenti* appended to Vincenzo Valgrisi's edition of the *Orlando Furioso* of 1556, Girolamo Ruscelli states that, when he was at Reggio in 1543, Galasso Ariosti showed him a copy of the Ferrarese edition of 1532 with marginal notes and corrections in Lodovico's own hand, made in preparation for a new edition of the poem. In addition to merely linguistic corrections and modifications, Lodovico had entirely cancelled the two most outrageous stanzas of the episode of Ricciardetto and Fiordesina in Canto xxv., and there were lines and stars on the margin of Canto xliii. which Ruscelli takes as indicating that the poet intended to alter the more disgusting feature in the doctor Anselmo's fall. 'Albeit, in sooth, it seems it would be hard to find anything that would so well fit in with the intention of the fable as that,' writes this well-intentioned pedant, 'still it will always be a lesser evil to lose some little grace and pleasantness in a thing of secondary importance, than to put wicked and disgraceful matters into books that are to live eternally.' Granted that Ruscelli's statement is correct, mine host's tale of Giocondo apparently was to be left untouched. Perhaps, Messer Lodovico considered that he had provided a sufficiently efficacious antidote for the discerning reader in the closely following death of Isabella.

As we have seen, Ariosto personally superintended the publication of three editions of the *Orlando Furioso*—in 1516, 1522, and 1532 respectively. The editions of 1516 and 1522 are both in forty cantos, the alterations and modifications in the second being mainly (but not exclusively) confined to language and style. Between the edition of 1522 and that of 1532 appeared a number of pirated and unauthorised editions, based mostly on that of 1522.¹ The author's great final edition of 1532 is in forty-six cantos. Not only is the diction and language further revised and perfected, but the actual substance of the poem is modified considerably; the references to contemporary persons and events, the flattery, the tributes

¹ At least seventeen of these pirate editions are known—three printed at Milan, one at Florence, and thirteen at Venice.



ALCOTON

CIRCE.
By Lavinia Fontana
Borghese Gallery, Rome.

to friendship and esteem, are brought up to date; a few stanzas are omitted;¹ in addition to isolated stanzas and groups of stanzas inserted here and there, a certain number of entirely new episodes have been introduced, and the whole action of the poem is lengthened, though the consummation remains the same.

This fresh matter is almost all written in a mood of comparatively high seriousness. It includes the admirable story of Olimpia; the episode of Ullania, the messenger of the Queen of Iceland, who is bearing the golden shield to Charlemagne and who, though no longer in the service of the Lady of the Lake, is still a thoroughly Arthurian creation; the opposition of Bradamante's parents, Aymon and Beatrice, to her marriage with Ruggiero, and their attempt to compel her to marry Leo Augustus, the son of the Emperor of the East instead of that poor and landless flower of chivalry. The generous rivalry between Leo Augustus (a noble character slightly but effectively sketched) and Ruggiero leads to one of those displays of self-denying *cortesía* that Renaissance poetry loved, and of which Shakespeare's Sonnets afford us, perhaps, the supreme example. It will be observed that the Ullania addition, like that of Olimpia, is directed to the greater glorification of women. The new thirty-seventh canto opens with the poet's defence of women's work and rights, culminating in the apotheosis of Vittoria Colonna, and closes with the chastisement of Marganorre, their inhuman persecutor, who seems modelled upon the Arthurian Sir Breuse Saunce Pité. The story of the events that led Marganorre to his cruel courses, the deaths of his two sons through lawless love, is related with considerable power, and shows that Ariosto, had he been so minded, could have won laurels in the field of tragedy.

Introduced into the episode of Ullania is the pictured pageant of the French invasions of Italy and their result, in Canto xxxiii. This has been censured by Panizzi and other

¹ The most noteworthy omission includes the curious stanzas on human respect (prefixed to Canto xxxv. in the edition of 1516), exemplified in the conduct of the Cardinal de' Medici and the Duke of Urbino towards the Estensi during the struggle with Pope Julius, which, nevertheless, did not exclude them from their friendship.

writers; but to me it seems a most masterly and inspiring summary of a great history, moving the imagination like the music heard by De Quincey in his opium-dream, that 'gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies.' The sudden cry of terror and dismay with which Boiardo had dropped the pen from his hand, as the Gallic host poured down into Italy, here receives its answer from past and contemporary history:—

‘Poco guadagno et infinito danno
Riporteran d'Italia; chè non lice
Che 'l Giglio in quel terreno habbia radice.’¹

Not dissimilarly had Dante from his paradisal height of contemplation declared that God would not change the imperial eagle for the golden lilies. The prophet of the *Divina Commedia* and the singer of the *Orlando Furioso* seem, after all, comparatively near together. Three and a half centuries were to be needed to fill up the gulf of time between the carnage of Ravenna, of Marignano, of Pavia, and the apparition of a new France as Italy's deliverer on the battlefields of Solferino and Magenta.

¹ ‘Little gain and infinite loss will they bring back from Italy; for it is not suffered that the Lily should take root in that land’ (*Orl. Fur.*, xxxiii. 10)

CHAPTER XII

ARIOSTO'S MINOR POEMS

ALTHOUGH he may have begun his literary career with the elegy in *terza rima* for the death of Leonora of Aragon, Ariosto's earlier poems are, as we saw, in Latin, with a few doubtful exceptions. 'He applied himself to Horace with very great zeal,' says Giovan Battista Pigna, who adds that Ariosto later gained favour at the Court of Leo by his interpretation of the Roman poet; 'in writing elegies, he aimed not less at the sweetness of Tibullus than at the passion of Propertius. And he strove, if he were composing iambics or hendecasyllabics, to identify himself completely with Catullus.'¹ These were manifestly his first models, the Virgilian imitations coming later with the epic. 'He took pleasure in Virgil,' writes Virginio Ariosti of his father, 'and in Tibullus for his style; greatly did he commend Horace and Catullus; but not much Propertius.' We may, perhaps, interpret this depreciation of Propertius simply as meaning that he did not recommend his style to his son as so good an example as the others for him to follow in composing Latin verse. In 1553, Virginio submitted the manuscript of his father's Latin poetry to Pigna, who selected fifty-four pieces to be published with his own Latin verses and those of Celio Calcagnini in a volume dedicated to Alfonso d'Este, the hereditary prince of Ferrara, who, six years later, became Duke Alfonso II.

The Latin poetry of the Italian Renaissance, and of the humanists in general, presents comparatively few attractions to the modern reader. It has, indeed, been left to the great poet who, in his own Odes, has revived the classical spirit

¹ *I Romanzi*, p. 7.

of his race in a newer form, to give an adequate appreciation of this side of Ariosto's genius.¹ We have already considered the chief poems of this epoch in his life, which falls between 1496 and 1503. That he wrote some few Italian poems at the same time seems certain from his own words in the fourth Satire, and from the testimony of Pigna and Garofolo, that among his elegies were some composed in his youth. The few that can plausibly be assigned to this time certainly cannot stand the comparison with his Latin lyrics, and let us realise how Bembo may well have held that his friend's true genius lay in cultivating the older tongue. The best of them, if I am right in ascribing it to this date, is the elegy beginning *O lieta piaggia*, with its Emilian landscape animated by Nymphs and Dryads, and its mannered complaints of the loved one's cruelty;² but even it is far inferior to the Latin elegies. This Latin period, however, had its permanent effects upon his later vernacular poetry; his study and imitation of the best classical models chastened Ariosto's taste and formed his inimitable style. 'The study and practice of Latin poetry,' writes Carducci, 'disciplined and trained Ariosto (redundantly prosaic and rugged in his first attempts in Italian verse) to that gracious harmony in its easy flow, that elegance in its abundance, which is lacking in other even great Italian poets and is his most special quality. Terence and his acquaintance with the Latin drama have aided Ariosto considerably in the places where his great poem discourses familiarly; Catullus and Horace have polished the most musical of his octaves, and cleared them from those superfluities and excrescences which impede and sometimes suffocate the poetry, for instance, of Boiardo, who, nevertheless, had so much imagination and so much power of representation.'³

With the exception of a few epitaphs (noteworthy among which are the highly adulatory, but far from unpoetical distichs on Cardinal Ippolito's supposed devoting his own life 'to the Gods' to save his brother's, and those on the death of Raphael⁴), Ariosto appears to have written only one

¹ Carducci, pp. 216-218.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 219, 220.

² Elegy xv. in Polidori.

⁴ *Carm.* ii. 1, iii. 1.

important Latin poem at a later period ; but this one—the elegy, *De diversis amoribus*, or *De sua ipsius mobilitate* (the former seems to be the correct title)—is beyond comparison his masterpiece in this kind. The whole of his early life is set forth : the light loves of his youth, his study of the law, his turning to poetry and the inception of his heroic epic ; the whole being ascribed to the mutability of his mind, *mens impar*. Then (an anticipation of the famous *Apollo, tua mercè*, of the first Satire), since the poet's labours meet with no recognition, he turns to seek fortune at the Court, from which (by a continuation of the same pleasant poetic fiction) the ingratitude of princes impels him to adopt for a while the profession of arms under Enea Pio, *pio celebri sub principe* ; with which, in its turn, he is speedily wearied :—

‘Iam neque castra placent, rursus nec classica nobis :
 Ite procul, getici tela cruenta Dei.
 Humanone truce[m] foedabo sanguine dextram,
 Ut meus assiduo sub bove crescat ager ?
 Et breve mortis iter sternam mihi, ut horridus umbram
 Horreat immitem portitor ipse meam ?
 Atque aliquis placidâ aspiciens a sede piorum
 Me procul Eumenidum verbera saeva pati :
 —En qui Musarum liquit grata ocia, dicat,
 Anxius ut raperet munere Martis opes ;—
 Manibus et sociis narret me digna subisse
 Supplicia, haud ullâ diminuenda die ?
 Antra mihi placeant potius, montesque supini,
 Vividaque irriguis gramina semper aquis ;
 Et Satyros inter celebres Dryadasque puellas,
 Plectra mihi digitos, fistula labra terat.
 Dum vaga mens aliud poscat, procul este Catones ;
 Este quibus parili vita tenore fluit ;
 Quos labor angat, iter cupientes limite certo
 Ire sub instabili cuncta novante polo.
 Me mea mobilitas senio deducat inertî,
 Dum studia haud desint quae variata iuvent.
 Me miserum ! quod in hoc non sum mutabilis uno,
 Quando me assiduâ compede vincit Amor ;
 Et nunc Hybla licet, nunc sit mea cura Lycoris,
 Et te Phylli modo, te modo Lyda velim ;
 Aut Glauram aut Glycerem, aut unam aut saepe ducentas
 Depeream, igne tamen perpete semper amo.’¹

¹ ‘Now in their turn neither camps nor trumpets please us ; hence, away, bloody darts of the Thracian God. Shall I defile my fierce right hand with

Internal evidence shows that this elegy must have been written some time between the end of 1509 and the summer of 1513. Lodovico's fickle loves were now at an end, and his *mens impar* was to find rest and haven in the nobler passion that inspired the greater part of his vernacular lyrics. Glycera, Glaura, Hybla, Lycoris, Lyda, Phyllis and the rest were, indeed, to yield to a new fire, lit by the torch of golden Alessandra.

In the vernacular, Ariosto's one lyrical masterpiece is the surpassingly beautiful canzone, already considered, on his falling in love with Alessandra on the festival of St. John at Florence, in 1513. This poem holds easily the same place of preeminence among Italian lyrics of the later Renaissance as does the *Epithalamion* of Spenser among the love poems of our Elizabethan age.

A small, but very choice collection of sonnets and madrigals, all in Alessandra's honour and written between this date and their marriage, forms a pendant to this. Though Petrarchan in form and expression (even to the extent of introducing the inevitable spiritual sonnet of *pentimento*, which here has a certain note of insincerity), they are all impressed with the more modern poet's personality. At first, obstacles prevent their union. They are kept apart by force of circumstances (Sonnet i.), and the poet for a while doubts whether his love is returned (Sonnet ii.), or, if it is, whether

human gore, that my fields may thrive under the labouring ox? Shall I strew for myself a brief path of death, so that the horrid Ferryman himself may shudder at my grim ghost? And shall one, from the placid realms of the blessed seeing me afar off enduring the cruel lashes of the Furies, say: Lo, he who left the pleasant quiet of the Muses, anxious to grasp wealth by gift of Mars; and tell his fellow-shades that I am suffering deserved punishment, not to be diminished by all eternity? Rather let the grots and mountain-slopes please me, and the grass ever green with cooling waters; and, among renowned Satyrs and Dryad maidens, let the lyre press my fingers, the pipe my lips. Whilst my roving mind asks other things, keep aloof, ye Catos, and ye for whom life flows in rigid tenour; ye whom labour torments, desiring to go on a certain track under the unstable heavens that alter all. Let my mobility deliver me from an inert old age, whilst those pursuits fail not which delight by being varied. Woe's me! that in this alone I am not mutable, when Love binds me in perpetual fetters; and although now Hybla, now Lycoris sways my heart, and now I desire thee, Phyllis, now thee, Lyda; whether I am languishing for Glaura or for Glycera, whether for one or oftentimes for two hundred, still I ever love with a perpetual fire' (*Carm.* i. 11).

hers is strong enough to withstand what appears to be the opposition of her family :—

‘ Per gran vento che spire,
Non si estingue, anzi più cresce un gran foco,
E spegne e fa sparire ogni aura il poco.
Quando ha guerra maggiore
Intorno, in ogni luogo, e in su le porte,
Tanto più un grande amore
Si ripara nel core, e fa più forte.
D’ humile e bassa sorte,
Madonna, il vostro si potria ben dire,
Se le minaccie l’ han fatto fuggire.’¹

We are given the usual Petrarchan lover’s complaints and lamentations, the usual raptures about her beauty and her golden hair, most of which, to the poet’s lyrical wrath, is cut off by a stern physician’s orders during an illness. Though the poet assures us that this *bellezza corruttibil* has never moved him like that of *un ingegno divino*, yet it is clear that Ariosto’s natural bent is to love like Catullus rather than like Petrarca, as the following admirable sonnet shows :—

‘ O avventuroso carcere soave,
Dove nè per furor nè per dispetto,
Ma per amor e per pietà distretto
La bella e dolce mia nemica m’ have.
Gli altri prigion al volger de la chiave
S’ attristano : io m’ allegro, che diletto
E non martir, vita e non morte aspetto,
Nè giudice sever nè legge grave ;
Ma benigne accoglienze, ma complessi
Licentiosi, ma parole sciolte
D’ ogni freno, ma risi, vezzi e giuochi ;
Ma dolci baci dolcemente impressi
Ben mille e mille e mille e mille volte ;
E se potran contarsi, ancho fien pochi.’²

¹ ‘ By greatest wind that blows, a great fire is not extinguished, nay, rather waxes more ; while every breeze quenches and makes a small spark die.

‘ When it has a greater war around, in every place and at its gates, so much the more does a great love take shelter in the heart and grow more strong. Yours, lady mine, could well be called of humble and base sort, if threats have made it fly ’ (Madrigal iv.).

² ‘ O blessed prison and sweet, in which not for anger nor despite, but for love and pity, my fair and gentle foe keeps me confined.

‘ Other captives at the turning of the key grow sad ; I rejoice, who await

In absence from her, to be able to see her occasionally, for a little while, aggravates rather than gives solace to his pain (Sonnet xvi.). Two sonnets bear the mark of some special occasion. The one (xvii.) depicts an unexpected meeting of the poet with his beloved at the passage of the Po, in dark and tempestuous weather which at once becomes clear and bright at her advent. In the other, written, perhaps, at Florence while waiting in uncertainty on the occasion of the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, the poet finds himself again in the city where Love took him captive, and can at last exult in the confidence that he and his beloved are one in heart :—

'Qui fu dove il bel crin già con sì stretti
 Nodi legommi, e dove il mal, che poi
 M' uccise, incominciò : sapestel voi,
 Marmoree loggie, alti e superbi tetti.
 Qui belle donne e cavalieri eletti
 Haveste, quai non hebbe Pelleo a' suoi
 Conviti allhor, che scelto in mille Heroi
 Fu a gli Himenei che Giove havea sospetti.
 Ben vi sovviene che di qui andai captivo,
 Traffitto il cor : ma non sapete forse
 Com' io morissi, e poi tornassi in vita ;
 E che Madonna, tosto che s' accorse
 Esser l'anima in lei da me fuggita,
 La sua mi diede, et hor con questa vivo.'¹

The only other canzone of Ariosto's which is above suspicion is the noble and pathetic ode addressed to Filiberta of Savoy

delight and not torment, life and not death, neither severe judge nor heavy law ;

'But loving greetings, passionate embraces, words all unrestrained, smiles, caresses and pleasures ; sweet kisses, sweetly impressed a thousand, thousand, thousand, thousand times ; and could they be counted, they would yet seem few' (Sonnet x.).

¹ 'It was here that the fair hair first bound me with such close bonds, and that the malady, that since has slain me, began. You knew it, marble terraces, high and lofty roofs.

'Here you had lovely ladies and chosen knights, such as Peleus had not at his banquets, when he was chosen out of a thousand heroes for the nuptials that Jove did dread.

'Surely you remember that I went hence captive, with heart transfixed : but you know not, perchance, that I died and then returned to life ; and that my lady, as soon as she perceived that the soul was in her that fled from me, gave me her own, and now with this I live' (Sonnet xviii. I have adopted the earlier reading of line 5 ; the later editors read, *Quel dì che Donne e cavalieri eletti*).

in the name of her husband, Giuliano de' Medici, on his death, in 1516. An apotheosis of chastity and abnegation might, at first, seem somewhat alien to the genius of the singer of Orlando; but, in that *d'ogni mal secolo infetto*, even the most worldly and cynical of Italians (which Ariosto was not) were ready to render unqualified admiration and enthusiastic homage to such women as Elisabetta Gonzaga, Vittoria Colonna, and Filiberta, who kept themselves unspotted in days when it was no mere declamatory rhetoric for poets to hold that the union of beauty with the angelical virtue was but too rare :—

‘ Segui pur, senza volgerti, la via
 Che tenuta hai sin qui sì drittamente ;
 Chè al Ciel e a le contente
 Anime, altra non è che meglio torni.
 Di me t' incresca, ma non altrimenti
 Che, s' io vivessi anchor, t' incresceria
 D' una partita mia
 Che tu havessi a seguir fra pochi giorni :
 E se qualche e qualch' anno ancho soggiorni
 Col tuo mortal a patir caldo e verno,
 Lo dêi stimar per un momento breve,
 Verso quest' altro, che mai non riceve
 Nè termine nè fin, viver eterno.
 Volga fortuna il perno
 A la sua rota in che i mortali aggira :
 Tu quel che acquisti mira,
 Da la tua via non declinando i passi ;
 E quel che a perder hai, se tu la lassi.

· · · · ·
 ‘ Questo più honor che scender da l' augusta
 Stirpe d' antichi Otthoni, estimar dêi :
 Di ciò più illustre sei,
 Che d' esser de' sublimi, incliti, e santi
 Philippi nata, et Ami et Amidei,
 Che fra l' arme d' Italia e la robusta,
 Spesso a' vicini ingiusta,
 Feroce Gallia, hanno tant' anni e tanti
 Tenuti sotto il lor giogo costanti
 Con gli Allobrogi i popoli de l' Alpe,
 E di lor nomi le contrade piene
 Da 'l Nilo al Boristene,
 E da l' estremo Idaspe al mar di Calpe.
 Di più gaudio ti palpe

Questa tua propria e vera laude il core,
 Che di veder al fiore
 De' gigli d' oro e al santo regno assunto
 Chi di sangue e d' amor ti sia congiunto.¹

A structural peculiarity of this canzone is that, while the stanza falls into the usual metrical periods, the sense does not correspond with this, but pauses, not at the *diesis* or break between the first and second half of the stanza, but after the key-line, the first verse of the *coda* or *syrma*. The result is that (with the exception of the first of the two stanzas quoted) there seems no emotional necessity for the arrangement of the rhymes. We find this, which is rare in Italian canzoni of the regular type, similarly shown in a poem which, though only doubtfully ascribed to Ariosto, appears to me to be authentic and a companion piece to the ode to Filiberta: *Spirto gentil, che sei nel terzo giro*. It is written in the name of the wife to her dead husband, a young Roman soldier (conjecturally identified with Marcantonio Colonna), and, though decidedly inferior to its predecessor and somewhat Petrarchan in manner, is much more than a conventional poetic funeral wreath, and has caught some fire. The mourning of the Nymphs and woodland Gods at the mouth of the Tiber has a curious Shelleyan suggestiveness.²

¹ 'Still follow, without turning, the way that until now thou hast held so straightly; for there is none other that better befits Heaven and the blessed souls. Mourn for me, but not otherwise than, were I still living, thou wouldst mourn if I set out on a journey which thou wert to follow in a few days. And, if thou dwellest yet some years with thy mortal frame to suffer heat and cold, thou must deem it a brief moment towards this other life, eternal, that never hath a term nor end. Let fortune turn her wheel in which she whirls mortals round: gaze thou at what thou dost gain by not bending down thy steps from thy course; and what thou hast to lose, if thou abandonest it.

'This shouldst thou esteem more honour than thy descent from the august stock of the ancient Othos; in this thou art more illustrious than in being sprung from the sublime, famous and holy Philips and Aymons and Amadei, who, between the arms of Italy and the robust, oft unjust to her neighbours, fierce Gaul, have for so many years held the peoples of the Alps with the Allobroges constant under their sway, and filled the lands with their names from the Nile to the Dnieper and from furthest East to the western sea. Let this, thy own and true praise, touch thy heart with more joy than to see assumed to the golden lilies and the holy kingdom him who is kin to thee in blood and love' (Canzone ii. stanzas 3 and 7).

² Stanza 7 (Canzone i. among the doubtful poems in Polidori). Marcantonio Colonna had gone over to the side of France, and was killed at the siege of the Castello of Milan in 1522, fighting against his own kindred who had remained constant to the League; his wife was Lucrezia di Gabriello Gara of Savona, according to Litta.

Better suited, perhaps, to the poet's genius are the elegies and capitoli in *terza rima*, in which he could move more freely and express himself more naturally. As we have seen, his first poem that has come down to us—the lament in 1493 for the Duchess Leonora—is in this form. The later ones are erotic in subject; mainly, but not, I think, exclusively, referring to Alessandra. They cover much the same ground as the sonnets, singing the lover's alternations of joy and grief, hope and despair, nor does the order in which they stand in the printed editions represent their chronological sequence. In one the rapture of possession is depicted with the most frankly sensual imagery, no detail of carnal satisfaction spared the reader or left to his imagination; while, in its companion piece, the light of the moon and the presence of possible witnesses on the way drive the lover back from his mistress's door, lest their secret should be discovered (Elegies vi. and vii.). In another (which, apparently, does not belong to the Alessandra series), while the poet seeks refuge from a fruitless, unresponded love in absence from the object of his passion and in scenes of more universal suffering, the whole carnage of Ravenna suddenly bursts upon our sight (Elegy x.). A nobler, tenderer sentiment finds expression in the lines written during Alessandra's illness, though perhaps overlaid with classical and mythological references, in which the poet beseeches the Eternal Father that he may be given the choice of Tiberius Gracchus or Admetus, that his life may be taken and hers be spared (Elegy xi.). Their secret marriage inspires an exultant poem (Elegy v.), in which the necessity for prudence and secrecy struggles in vain with the overwhelming flood of the poet's all-mastering joy. Worthy, too, of the enthusiast for the *gran bontà de' cavalieri antiqui* is his professed ideal of chivalrous honour:—

‘La fede mai non debbe esser corrotta,
O data a un sol, o data anchor a cento,
Data in palese, o data in una grotta.
Per la vil plebe è fatto il giuramento;
Ma tra gli spirti più elevati sono
Le semplici promesse un sacramento.’¹

¹ ‘A pledge must never be broken, whether given to one alone or to a hundred, given openly or given in a cave.

‘Oaths were made for the vulgar herd; but among more elevated spirits simple promises are a sacrament’ (Elegy ix. 43-48).

In two of these poems, we find Ariosto at Florence (Elegies i. and xiv.). The first, written while waiting for instructions from Duke Alfonso on the occasion of the death of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1519, idealises the state of Florence under the dead man's grandfather, the elder Lorenzo, and prays in the name of the city to the deities of Olympus for the preservation of the last, weak, leafless branch of the laurel—the little baby girl, Caterina de' Medici. In the second, addressing the *gentil città* in his own person, Messer Lodovico gives the picture of the city of flowers that every lover of it has drawn upon his own heart from the first day that he entered its gates, in some fifty lines of enthusiastic eulogy. He, surely, strikes the keynote of all appreciation of the city of Beatrice:—

‘ Qual stile è sì facondo e sì deserto,
 Che de le laudi tue corresse in tutto
 Un così lungo campo e così aperto ?
 Del tuo Mugnon potrei, quando è più asciutto,
 Meglio i sassi contar, che dire a pieno
 Quel che ad amarti e riverir m' ha indutto.’¹

This poem may, or may not, have been written on the same occasion as the preceding one, but it was clearly composed later than that famous summer day of 1513; even the delights of Florence cannot console the poet for having left his heart in Ferrara:—

‘ Oltre quei monti, a ripa l' onda vaga
 Del Re de' fiumi, in bianca e pura stola,
 Cantando ferma il Sol la bella maga,
 Che con sua vista può sanarmi sola.’²

A companion piece to the poem, already considered, which the poet composed when struck down by fever in the passage of the Apennines (Capitolo i.), shows us Ariosto on his way to the Garfagnana, struggling through a storm of wind and rain on a worn-out and terrified horse, furious with himself at

¹ ‘What pen is so eloquent and so fluent as to run over all the field of thy praises, so long and so manifest?’

‘Better could I number the stones of thy Mugnone, when it is most dry, than tell in full what has induced me to love and reverence thee’ (Elegy xiv. 7-12).

² ‘Beyond those mountains, on the bank of the goodly stream of the King of rivers, in pure white robe the fair enchantress stays the Sun with her song, the sight of whom alone can heal me’ (*Ibid.*, 73-76).

having consented to leave Alessandra, and hopelessly miserable at the prospect before him when he reaches his seat of government :—

‘ Non più tranquille già nè più serene
 Hore attender poss’ io ; ma al fin di queste
 Pene e travagli, altri travagli e pene.
 Altre piogge al coperto, altre tempeste
 Di sospiri e di lagrime mi aspetto,
 Che mi sien più continue e più moleste.
 Duro sarammi più che sasso il letto,
 E il cor tornar per tutta questa via
 Mille volte ogni dì sarà costretto ;
 Languendo il resto de la vita mia,
 Si struggerà di stimolosi affanni,
 Percosso ogn’ hor di penitencia ria.
 I mesi, l’ hore, e i giorni a parer anni
 Cominciaranno ; e diverrà sì tardo,
 Che parrà il tempo haver tarpato i vanni ;
 Che già, godendo del soave sguardo,
 De l’ invitta beltà, de l’ immortale
 Valor, del bel sembiante, onde tutt’ ardo,
 Vedeà fuggir più che da corda strale.’¹

Included among Ariosto’s elegies and capitoli is the beginning of an heroic poem in *terza rima*, on the exploits of an Obizzo da Este (apparently a son, unknown to the genealogists, of the Marchese Azzo VIII.), fighting against the English under the banner of King Philip the Fair of France.² ‘He seems to have thought of attempting an epic in the

¹ ‘No more tranquil nor serene hours can I expect ; but, at the end of these pains and travails, other travails and pains.

‘I await other showers within doors, other tempests of sighs and tears, that will be more continuous and more grievous to me.

‘Harder to me than stone will be my bed, and my heart will be constrained a thousand times each day to return by all this road ;

‘The rest of my life will wither and be destroyed with stabbing anguish, smitten each hour by cruel repentance.

‘The months, the hours, and the days will begin to seem years ; and Time will become so slow that he will seem to have his wings clipped ;

‘Whom once, when I rejoiced in the sweet looks, the peerless beauty, the immortal worth, the fair countenance for which I utterly burn, I saw fly faster than arrow from the bow’ (Elegy iii. 52-70. The first edition reads : *Che già aspettando di furar un sguardo da l’invitta beltà*).

² Capitolo iii. Carducci (p. 264) holds that the Obizzo in question is Obizzo III., the lover of Lipa Ariosti : but it is difficult to reconcile this with Ariosto’s statement that the father of his hero was *di cinque alme cittadi Marchese*, which Aldobrandino was not.

Tuscan manner,' writes Pigna, quoting the opening lines, *Canterò l'arme, canterò gli affanni*, etc.; 'but to this undertaking he gave afterwards a different end from what he had intended, because he perceived that our tongue is not suited for a poem of that kind.'¹ It would, at first sight, be tempting to assume that this was a fragment of the poem from which Bembo dissuaded him in his youth; but Carducci reasonably urges that the style is far too free and equal for Ariosto to have written it at that time in his life. And, surely, the beautiful and tender invocation with which it opens can refer only to Alessandra:—

'Voi l' usato favore, occhi soavi,
 Date a l' impresa; voi che del mio ingegno,
 Occhi miei belli, havete ambe le chiavi.
 Altri vada a Parnaso, c' hora i' vegno,
 Dolci occhi, a voi; nè chieder altra aita
 A' versi miei, se non da voi, disegno.'²

I should be inclined to assign it to 1517, or 1518, when the poet, having published the first version of his *Orlando*, was planning some new work, and had already turned to the *terza rima* of the Satires. He was intending, perhaps, to serve the Duke, his new patron, with a poem, even as he had done the Cardinal. For this purpose, the subject was at least well chosen. It is, perhaps, not impossible that two pieces, included among the elegies, written in the name of women, may have been intended to form part of this same poem.³ The one, the lament of a woman falsely accused of unchastity, might belong to some Ginevra of the abandoned epic; the other, the utterance of a woman's unswerving fidelity to her lover, practically reappears on the lips of Bradamante in the later version of the *Orlando*.⁴

Ariosto seems to have taken little account of his lyrics and

¹ *I Romanzi*, p. 116.

² 'Do you, sweet eyes, give your wonted favour to my undertaking; you, my beauteous eyes, that hold both the keys of my genius.

'Let others go to Parnassus, for now I come, sweet eyes, to you; nor would I crave other aid for my verses than from you.'

³ Elegies iv. and viii.

⁴ *Orl. Fur.*, xlv. 61-66; cf. Rajna, pp. 592, 593. These stanzas are among Ariosto's later additions, and are not found in the 1516 edition of the poem.

elegies, though others valued them highly and strove to get possession of them. In October, 1532, we find Marco Pio writing to Guidobaldo della Rovere :—

‘I send you these few rhymes of Ariosto, which I have put together against his will and with difficulty ; against his will, because he does not wish them to be seen, as he says that they have not been corrected, and that he is ashamed of their being seen. I have never been able to have any from him himself ; and so I say *with difficulty*, because I have been obliged to collect them from many different persons. And, certainly, were it not that I should prefer your Lordship to complain of their uncorrectedness, or rather of their old age, than of me, I do not know that I should have sent them to you ; for, in fact, they are things that Ariosto composed a long time ago and never revised since so that, perhaps, they will not seem to you to have that flavour which you expect from his work. But, together with him, I pray you hold me excused, if you find they do not satisfy you. I send you rhymes of Ariosto alone, because there is no one amongst us who composes, excepting him—things worthy, I mean, of the judgment and sight of your Excellence.’¹

Writing to the Duke of Mantua, in the previous January, Ariosto had announced his intention of publishing some of his minor poems. ‘I am also thinking of printing some little things of mine ; so your Excellence must not think me importunate and indiscreet, if, whenever I shall have need of paper, I ask you to give it free passage through your territory.’² Death, however, cut short all these plans, and Ariosto never himself published any of his poetry, save the *Orlando*. Many of his lyrics fell into the hands of the *saltimbanchi* or *cantimbanchi*, wandering singers and minstrels, swarms of whom (mostly Ferrarese in origin) used to travel about over Italy, attending fairs and festas, acting as buffoons, singing or reciting, selling and exhibiting curios, even practising as physicians. Standing on benches or mounting extemporised platforms in the piazzas of the great cities, they

¹ Letter of October 10, 1532. Baruffaldi, Document 22.

² Letter clxxvii., January 15, 1532.

would troll you out a series of stanzas by the latest poet of the day, or offer you an infallible medicine for all your infirmities, the incomparable, the miraculous 'Elettuario Vitae,' a little vase of which contains the continuous health and longevity of man: 'and were it not that eternal and immutable laws, through the fault of our primal father, forbid it, this would have been sufficient to make us perpetual and immortal.'¹ Every one knows the delightful story of Dante's indignation when he heard the blacksmith or the driver of mules chanting a mutilated version of his mystical lyrics. The situation was more serious in Ariosto's days, when these pirates of the piazza not only sang, but actually had printed and sold their poetical booty. Giulio Ferrarese, Ippolito Ferrarese, Leonardo il Furlano, Alberto il Toscano, all men of this stamp, had scattered lyrics and capitoli of Messer Lodovico printed in the thirties of the century, mingled with other matter wrongly attributed to him. In April, 1535, the poet's heirs obtained from the Venetian Senate the privilege, or exclusive right, for ten years of printing 'certain comedies, elegies, epigrams, capitoli, sonnets, and stanzas, and other divers compositions of the said Messer Lodovico, Latin as well as vernacular, which they desire to publish, in order that the said heirs, rather than strangers, may derive some utility from his honest vigils, to make some amends for the misfortune that his death has been to them.'² But they appear to have made no use of the privilege. The first collected edition of Ariosto's *Rime* was published at Venice in 1546, edited by Jacopo Coppà ('Jacopo Modanese'), a saltimbanco of a superior kind who was himself something of a poet and man of letters, in collaboration with his patroness, Caterina Barbaro.³ This was, however, a properly

¹ Thus the *Erbolato*, the curious and amusing advertisement of this quack medicine in admirable Italian prose, written for the wandering physician of the piazza, Antonio Faentino, and ascribed to Ariosto. Cf. Ben Jonson, *Volpone*, Act ii. scene 1. For Ariosto's relations with these saltimbanchi and cantimbanchi, see S. Bongi, *Annali di Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrarî*, vol. ii. pp. 26-36.

² The petition is in Bongi, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 281 n.

³ It contains thirty-one sonnets (Sonnets i. to xxvii., with the four printed as doubtful, in Polidori's edition), nine madrigals (all those in Polidori, excepting viii., xi., xii., which are clearly spurious), four canzoni (i. and ii. in Polidori, with the doubtful iii. and iv.), eighteen capitoli (corresponding to Polidori, Elegies i. to xv., Capitoli i. to iii.), and the stanzas in *ottava*

authorised edition, published, presumably, by arrangement with Messer Lodovico's heirs. It may be said to have formed the basis of all subsequent editions.

Of far greater charm and interest than the *Rime* is the little group of poetical epistles in *terza rima*, known as the *Satire*. Much should we have prized to-day certain notices that Virginio Ariosti promised to give the world concerning what, after the *Orlando Furioso*, is the most important of his father's works :—

‘His first Satires : and the reason why he afterwards kept from writing Satires. Which was the first Satire that he composed ; and how he thought they were lost and, therefore, composed no more of them. And, after he had found them again, he began two or three others, which remained imperfect, of which one is written to Castiglione.’

Virginio's words remain still mysterious and unexplained. None of these imperfect poems have come down to us. The Satires of Messer Lodovico, as we now have them, are seven in number, all written after his rupture with the Cardinal Ippolito. These seven Satires are the most perfect, unapproachable examples of epistolary correspondence in verse. They were, of course, not actually written or sent as letters. As their most recent editor, Giovanni Tambara, well points out, the occasional element constitutes the smallest part of them ; the epistolary form is a mere pretext for the poem. They are the most admirable miniature autobiography that a great poet ever bequeathed to the world. The figure of the genial, simple-minded, true-hearted gentleman, keenest of observers, but kindest of cynics, keeping the broad way of life in the most corrupt of epochs, stands out in the foreground of the picture. Behind him is the Italy of the Cinquecento, in the background only, but with even that background painted with a pencil of which every touch tells, as the seven scenes are shifted. We see in succession the corrupted Church, the state of the Court and Curia, something of the family life of old Ferrara, the mountainous region of the Garfagnana with its factions and bandits, the habits and customs of the scholars

rima, beginning *La gentil donna*. It will be noticed that the disputed and beautiful canzone, *Spirto gentil*, is not included. Jacopo had published the *Erbolato* as Ariosto's in 1545.

and humanists of the Universities. Hardly anything is left out, and hardly anything is set down in malice. The student who knows these seven wonderful little poems well, knows more of the sixteenth century in Italy, more of the real life of the later Renaissance, than he could learn from a whole library of ponderous histories and learned treatises.

Ariosto's satire is, in the main, of a genial order. Seldom, indeed, does his indignation entirely master him, as in the appalling picture of the corruption of the Curia which he gives in the epistle to Galasso Ariosti, his brother, where his *grido* becomes for the nonce almost Dantesque. He is arguing against entering the Church as a profession. What boots it, he asks, if the aspirant to ecclesiastical honours at last reaches the highest place and becomes Sovereign Pontiff?—

‘Che fia s’ avrà la cathedra beata ?
 Tosto vorrà li figli o li nepoti
 Levar da la civil vita privata.
 Non penserà d’Achivi o d’Epiroti
 Dar lor dominio ; non avrà disegno
 In l’Arta o in la Morea farli despoti ;
 Non cacciarne Ottoman, per dar lor regno,
 Ove da tutta Europa havria soccorso,
 E faria del suo ufficio ufficio degno ;
 Ma spezzar la colonna e spegner l’orso,
 Per togli Palestina e Tagliacozzo
 E darli a’ suoi, sarà il primo discorso.
 E qual strozzato e qual col capo mozzo
 In la Marca lasciando e in la Romagna,
 Triompherà, del christian sangue sozzo.
 Darà l’Italia in preda a Francia o Spagna,
 Che, sozzopra voltandola, una parte
 Al suo bastardo sangue ne rimagna.
 L’excomuniche empir quinci le carte,
 E quindi ministrar si vederanno
 L’indulgentie plenarie al fiero Marte.’¹

He has an only less fiery outburst against those minor scourges of sixteenth-century Italy, the oppressive ministers

¹ ‘What will it be if he get the blessed Chair? At once he will want to raise his sons or nephews out of their civil private life.

‘He will not think of giving them dominion over Achaeans or Epirotes ; he will form no plan to make them despots in Albania or the Morea ;

‘Not to hunt thence the Ottoman to give them a kingdom, in which he would have aid from all Europe, and would do a deed worthy of his office ;

‘But to break the Column and slay the Bear, that he may take Palestrina

and upstart tyrants (portraits here slightly disguised under imaginary names, but which his readers would instantly recognise): more particularly one of the former, a sort of Alfonso Trotti prudently transferred to the papal service:—

‘Solonnio di facende sì gran soma
Tolle a portar, che ne saria già morto
Il più forte somier che vada a Roma.
Tu ’l vedi in Banchi, a la Dogana, al Porto,
In Camera apostolica, in Castello,
Da un ponte a l’altro a un volgier d’occhi sorto.
Si stilla notte e di sempre il cervello,
Come al papa ogn’hor dia freschi guadagni,
Con novi datii e multe e con balzello.
Gode fargli saper che se ne lagni,
E dica ognun, che a l’util del padrone
Non riguardi parenti nè compagni.
Il popol l’odia, et ha di odiar ragione,
Se di ogni mal che la città flagella,
Gli è ver ch’egli sia il capo e la cagione.
E pur grande e magnifico se appella,
Nè senza prima scoprirsì il capo
Il nobile o il plebeo mai gli favella.’¹

But, as a rule, the poet’s anger is like that of his St. John in the Heaven of the Moon. It blazes up for a moment, and then passes away in a quiet laugh:—

and Tagliacozzo from them and give them to his kin, will be his first discourse.

‘And, leaving one strangled and another short of his head in the Marches and in Romagna, he will triumph, defiled with Christian blood.

‘He will give Italy in prey to France or Spain, that, by turning it upside down, a part thereof may remain to his bastard blood.

‘Here will excommunications be seen filling the registers, and there plenary indulgences ministered to fierce Mars’ (*Satire* ii. 208-228).

¹ ‘Solonius takes upon his back so great a load of business, that with it the strongest sumpter that goes to Rome would be already dead.

‘Thou seest him at the banks, at the customhouse, at the harbour, in the Apostolic Chamber, in the Castle, flown from one bridge to the other in a twinkling of an eye.

‘Night and day he ever works his brain, how each hour to bring the Pope fresh gains, with new duties, fines and taxes.

‘He rejoices to hear that men complain thereof, and that each one says that, for his master’s profit, he heeds not kinsmen nor comrades.

‘The people hate him, and have reason for hating, if it is true that of every ill that scourges the city he is the head and cause.

‘And yet he is styled great and magnificent, nor without first uncovering the head does noble or plebeian ever converse with him’ (*Satire* iv. 76-93).

‘Così dicendo il vecchio benedetto
 Gli occhi infiammò, che parveno duo fuochi :
 Poi volto al Duca con un saggio riso,
 Tornò sereno il conturbato viso.’¹

There is some little controversy about the proper order of the seven Satires, but I am inclined to think that the editor of the edition published by Gabriel Giolito at Venice in 1550 (which we may call the first authorised edition) was justified in his claim that he was reprinting them according to the order intended by the poet himself, though this is manifestly not the strict chronological sequence. The series should thus open with the satire addressed to Alessandro Ariosti and Lodovico da Bagno, on the poet's rupture with the Cardinal, and close with the one to Bonaventura Pistofilo, declining the offer of the post of ducal ambassador to the Holy See, and ending in the pleasant hint of the great love that was keeping him bound, body and soul, to his native city. Read in this order, the series forms a more harmonious whole, and ends on the note which we know to be that of the poet's last years. It may, indeed, well be that this seventh poetical epistle was not really written, as it professes to be, from the Garfagnana, but actually composed in later times, when Messer Lodovico was comfortably settled down in Ferrara. Be that as it may, it is the most genial of the whole series. What, for instance, can be more delightful than Ariosto's description of the things that might attract him to Rome, were it not that a sweeter and stronger force kept him in Ferrara?—

‘Dimmi ch'io potrò haver otio talhora
 Di riveder le muse, e con lor sotto
 Le sacre frondi ir poetando anchora.
 Dimmi che al Bembo, al Sadoletto, al dotto
 Iovio, al Cavallo, a Blosio, al Molza, al Vida
 Potrò ogni giorno e al Tebaldeo far motto ;
 Tor di essi hor uno e quando uno altro guida
 Pei sette colli, che col libro in mano
 Roma in ogni sua parte mi dividea.
 — Qui, dica, il Circo, qui il Foro romano,
 Qui fu Suburra, e questo è il sacro clivo ;
 Qui Vesta il tempio, e qui il solea haver Iano.—

¹ ‘As he spoke thus, the eyes of the blessed old man flashed till they seemed two fires ; then, turning to the Duke with a wise laugh, his wrathful countenance grew calm again’ (*Orl. Fur.*, xxxv. 30).

Dimmi c' havrò di ciò ch'io leggo o scrivo
 Sempre consiglio, o da latin quel torre
 Voglia, o da toscò, o da barbato argivo.
 Di libri antiqui ancho mi puoi proporre
 Il numer grande, che per publico uso
 Sisto da tutto il mondo fe raccorre.
 Proponendo tu questo, s' io ricuso
 L'andata, ben dirai che triste humore
 Habbia il discorso rational confuso.' ¹

Between these two, come the truly satirical assault on the corruption of the Roman Curia addressed to Galasso Ariosti (ii.); the letters to his cousins, Annibale and Sigismondo Malaguzzi (iii. and iv.), on the texts, respectively, of his having entered the service of Duke Alfonso and his life in the Garfagnana; the satire on Marriage, addressed also to Annibale Malaguzzi (v.), which invites comparison with the expansion of Theophrastus introduced by Boccaccio into his *Vita di Dante*, but is, unfortunately, disfigured by worse than Boccaccian coarseness and cynicism; the poem to Pietro Bembo (vi.), which, taking as text the going of Virginio Ariosti to the Studio of Padua, paints at once the conditions of literary and university life of the time (by no means sparing the darker shades), and tells so inimitably the story of the poet's own early struggles to ascend Parnassus.² I have already drawn from

¹ 'Tell me that I shall sometimes have leisure to see the Muses again, and with them again go poetising under the sacred boughs.

'Tell me that I shall be able every day to chat with Bembo, with Sadoletto, with the learned Giovio, with Cavallo, with Blosio, with Molza, with Vida and with Tebaldeo;

'To take now one and now another of them as guide over the seven Hills, who, with book in hand, will divide Rome for me in all her parts.

'Here, may he say, is the Circus, here the Roman Forum, here was Subura, and this is the sacred Steep; here Vesta had her temple, and here Janus his.

'Tell me that I shall always have advice for what I read or write, whether I would take it from Latin or from Tuscan or from bearded Greek.

'Also thou canst suggest to me the great number of ancient books, which Sixtus had collected from all the world for public use.

'If thou dost propose this and I still refuse to go, thou wilt surely say that a sad humour has confused my use of reason' (*Sat.* vii. 124-144).

² The only real difficulty is whether the satire to Galasso Ariosti or that on the rupture with Ippolito should take the first place. Virginio Ariosti's words, *Quale fu la prima Satira che compose*, show that the question had arisen in his day. In the manuscript the former stands first, but there is a marginal gloss to each (in the writing of the second class of corrections) reversing the order, which is a correction adopted by the Giolittine editor. In the edition of 1534, the satire on Marriage is put first, probably with the

these sources at intervals in these pages to illustrate the tale of the poet's life by his own words. The fortunate circumstance of our possessing, in addition to the last mentioned satire, the actual letter in plain prose which Virginio took with him to Bembo, enables us to measure the difference between these poetical epistles and the letters that Messer Lodovico really wrote on the occasions that suggested them. If the letter ever comes to light in which the poet gratefully declines Messer Bonaventura's offer of getting him the Roman embassy from the Duke, we shall similarly find it a very different document from the wonderful seventh Satire.

Garofolo tells us that Ariosto intended to increase the number of his Satires and to publish them himself, but that he was prevented by those domestic distractions and troubles which forced him, for a while, to leave off writing poetry. It seems, however, hardly credible that he could openly have published such bold criticism of his rulers and contemporaries, even in the broad-minded and tolerant Court of Duke Alfonso. It is at least certain that none of them saw the light during the poet's life-time, and that he kept so jealous a hand over them that he succeeded in saving them from following the fate of his prose comedies and falling into the hands of pirate printers. It is probable, however, that he let copies pass from hand to hand among those of his friends and acquaintances who could be trusted, since Paolo Giovio mentions them in a work written in 1527,¹ and Luigi Alamanni, when publishing his own Satires in 1532, refers to Ariosto (in his third Satire addressed to Antonio Brucioli) as a master in this kind of composition. The Florentine's lines have a peculiar value and interest as they for the first time represent, in his life-time, Ariosto as the successor as a satirist to the poet of the *Divina Commedia* :—

‘Non posso più tacer ; chi tanto o quanto
Tacer porria ? Crispino e Nomentano
Non habbian più tra peccatori 'l vanto.
Nè si vergogni 'l nostro gran Toscano

idea of obtaining a success of scandal. Later editors have unwarrantably reversed the positions of the last two poems for chronological reasons.

¹ ‘Sunt et nonnullae eius *Satyræ* et *Suppositi* perfaceta comedia,’ in *Fragmentum Trium Dialogorum Pauli Jovii Episcopi Nucerni*, published by Tiraboschi, tom. ix. (Rome, 1785), pp. 95, 96.

D'una Cianghella, un Lapo Saltarello,
C'hor chi mille ne vuol, non cerca 'n vano.
O viver nostro da virtù rubello,
Di quello ond' altri già vergogna havea
Ornato hoggi ti fai, giocondo e bello.

‘E voi contra 'l mio dir posate ogn' ira,
Bruciol mio charo, nè d' udir vi doglia
Satireggiar con voi mia bassa lyra.

‘Nè l'Ariosto anchor di me si lagne,
Il Ferrarese mio chiaro e gentile,
C' hoggi con lui cantando m' accompagne;
Nè 'l mio basso saper si prenda a vile,
Chè fors' anchor (s' io non l'estimo 'ndarno),
Girando 'l verno in più cortese Aprile,
Non havrà a schivo 'l Po le rive d'Arno.’¹

There exists only one known contemporary manuscript of Ariosto's Satires—the famous manuscript in the Biblioteca Civica of Ferrara—which was reproduced in facsimile on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the poet's birth. Recent research has completely destroyed the pious belief that this manuscript is Ariosto's own autograph copy of these seven poems; but it seems very probable that it is a copy written under the poet's direction, with corrections and alterations of two kinds, one kind being made by Ariosto's own hand, the others added at a later epoch.² It is just possible

¹ ‘I can no longer keep silent; who could keep silent about so much infamy? Crispinus and Nomentanus shall no more carry it off among sinners. Nor need our great Tuscan be ashamed of a Cianghella or a Lapo Saltarello, for now whoso wants a thousand of them does not seek in vain. O age of ours rebellious against virtue! Thou dost deck and plume thyself to-day with that for which another was ashamed of old.

‘And do you lay aside all anger against my speech, my dear Brucioli, nor be displeased to hear my humble lyre strike the satiric note with you.

‘Nor let Ariosto either complain of me, my famous and gentle Ferrarese, that to-day it accompanies me in singing with him; nor may he despise my humble skill; for, perhaps, again (if I do not reckon in vain), when the winter passes on to more courteous April, the Po will have no cause to disdain the banks of Arno’ (Luigi Alamanni, *Opere Toscane*, Florence, 1532, pp. 366-370).

² G. Tambara in his Introduction to his critical edition of the *Satire*, pp. 42-64. Cf. G. Agnelli, *I Frammenti autografi dell' Orlando Furioso*, p. 7. For a less reverential view of the Ferrarese manuscript, see the *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, xlii. fasc. 3.

that these later alterations and corrections, which appear to have been made in connection with the authorised edition of 1550, may have proceeded ultimately from the poet himself, and have been copied in from another manuscript now lost.

Two pirated editions of the Satires were printed in the year following Ariosto's death—in June and October, respectively, 1534—without any name of place or publisher.¹ In spite of the exclusive rights obtained from the Venetian Senate by the poet's heirs, as we saw, in April, 1535, a number of other unlawful editions and reprints followed, both at Venice and in Tuscany. In 1550, Gabriel Giolito issued at Venice an authorised edition, edited by Anton Francesco Doni, under the alluring title: 'Le Satire di M. Lodovico Ariosto tratte dall'originale di mano dell'autore, con due Satire non più vedute, et con molta diligenza ristampate.' The text followed in this edition is that of the manuscript at Ferrara (including the second series of corrections and alterations), which had probably been supplied to the publisher by Virginio Ariosti or some other of the poet's heirs; but there is absolutely nothing to justify or to explain the promise on the title-page of two entirely new Satires.² For this promise, Doni himself, a most unreliable person, was presumably responsible; he had, perhaps, expected to get from Ariosto's heirs the unfinished additional Satires mentioned by Virginio. However, he says nothing about it in his dedicatory letter to Giovanni Paolo Cavriolo, and this is the last time we hear anything of them.

Giolito republished the Satires in 1553, no longer under Doni's editorship, with a pleasant and appropriate dedication to Ercole Bentivoglio. 'My illustrious Lord: I know that I could not do anything that would be more acceptable to the blessed soul of our excellent Ariosto, than that, being about to reprint his Satires in the way they were arranged and corrected by him, they should be dedicated by me to the name of your Lordship. And this not only because of the close friendship

¹ A copy of the first of these—the edition of June, 1534—is in the Grenville Library, which also possesses a copy of the still rarer edition published (with the usual portrait of Messer Lodovico) in Venice by Niccolò d'Aristotile detto Zoppino, 1535.

² For this very rare edition, see S. Bongi, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 280-286; G. Tambara, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-29.

and affection that there was between you and Messer Lodovico while he lived; for he showed in his most learned and most delightful poem, by mentioning you with honour, how much he esteemed and honoured your virtues; but also because of the conformity of your wits, which have impelled you both to run with equal praise along this road which has been by few (nay, by no one that I know of) in our days tried with success.' Setting aside the conventional and inevitable flattery of the closing sentence, one feels that this dedication would have been acceptable to the spirit of one to whom friendship meant as much as it undoubtedly did to Messer Lodovico.

Ascribed to Lodovico Ariosto are the fragments of five cantos of a poem in *ottava rima*, entitled *Rinaldo Ardito*. None of his contemporary biographers make any mention of his having begun such a poem, which is first mentioned as his by Anton Francesco Doni in 1551.¹ A supposed autograph manuscript came to light in the eighteenth century, and the text of these fragments was published in 1846. From internal evidence, these stanzas were written between the battle of Pavia and the death of Duke Alfonso, that is, between 1525 and 1534—the very years in which Ariosto was preparing the final edition of the *Orlando*. It is quite inconceivable that, at this time, he could have also produced these clumsy, spiritless, and witless stanzas, which are clearly the work of some Ferrarese imitator (possibly Virginio or Gabriele Ariosti, as has been suggested), if they be not a deliberate forgery. The poem contains three stanzas (in the triumph of Venus) of absolutely abominable filthiness—pornography of the most loathsome description which one is unwilling to attribute to Virginio or Gabriele, albeit we know, from his prologue to the *Scolastica*, that the latter was not incapable of offending in this respect. The one tolerable part of the poem is the Machiavellian defence of Italian valour, suggested by the delight of Charlemagne at the arrival of the Italian crusaders.²

In addition to the lyrics and compositions in *terza rima*, there are, however, certain minor poems of Messer Lodovico

¹ In *La Seconda Libreria del Doni*, Venice, 1551, p. 82, under Lodovico Ariosto, 'Rinaldo Ardito, dodici canti.'

² Canto iv. 38-40.

in *ottava rima*, which are undoubtedly authentic, and more or less directly connected with the *Orlando Furioso*.

A series of eighty-four stanzas—first published at the end of the Venetian edition of the *Rime* in 1546, and then again as a poetical appendix to the *Orlando* in Gabriel Giolito's edition of 1547—follows the matter of Canto xxxii., the episode of Ullania, the messenger of the Queen of Iceland, which is one of Ariosto's additions to the last edition of his epic. It tells the story of the shield, *il ricco scudo d'oro*, which Ullania is bearing to Charlemagne, and describes the designs engraved or enamelled upon it by the Cumaean Sibyl. These set forth all the wars of Italy from the invasion of Rhadagaisus the Goth in 405 down to the struggle for the possession of Ferrara in 1308—all being represented as ultimately proceeding from the donation of Constantine. The idea was, of course, taken from the shield of Aeneas in the *Aeneid*. Probably, the poet intended this poetical summary of the history of his country for Canto xxxiii., but ultimately substituted for it the far finer and more interesting series of pictures on the wall, representing the results of the French invasions of Italy down to the destruction of the army of Lautrec a few years before he wrote. Political reasons have been suggested for this alteration; but the poet's motives were, probably, mainly artistic. He gained greater verisimilitude by thus transferring these vast scenes of battle and carnage from the surface of a shield to the walls of a palace, and greater actuality by the concentration of the subject to events of immediate and surpassing interest to his hearers and readers.¹ We fear, too, that he did not underestimate the increased opportunity for adulation that the alteration offered to his pen.

Of far greater importance are the *Cinque Canti*, first published in 1545 as an appendix to the Aldine edition of the *Orlando Furioso*, under the title: 'Five Cantos of a new book of Messer Lodovico Ariosto, which follow the matter of the *Furioso*.' From the dedicatory letter of Antonio Manuzio (a son and successor of the famous publisher Aldo) to 'the noble and valiant captain, Giovan Battista Olivo da Goito,'

¹ Cf. Rajna, pp. 382, 383; V. Pirazzoli in the *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, xlv. pp. 315-323.

we learn that they had been given to the press by Virginio Ariosti:—

‘The occupations in which, as you know, I find myself continually involved have delayed me until now in publishing the *Orlando Furioso* with the addition of 530 stanzas, composed by the same author, which in these years I have had from the noble Messer Virginio Ariosti, most worthy son of so great a father. Nor, because they lack their beginning, do I fear that they will not give marvellous pleasure, both by their style and by their subject. The poet, ingeniously and learnedly, as is his wont, represents the delightful fable of the Fays; who, after many injuries and insults received from the Paladins of France, at length meet in council in their kingdom (gracefully described in poetic colours by him), and, not being able to endure that their authority and power should be so scorned and contemned, plot the ruin of the Court of King Charles and of France. The matter is so far from satiating or wearying the minds of those who read, that I opine that there will be none who will not complain of Nature or Fate which has spoilt so fair a design, and deprived so beautiful a work of its perfection, by taking the author out of life before he could give it its ultimate revision with the learned file of his divine genius. But, with all the imperfection of this work, I am quite certain that every virtuous person will hold it very dear, and will thank me and him who has deigned to honour my press with it, infinitely, for having communicated to the world the last fruit of Messer Lodovico Ariosto; from whose most fertile wit we have so many others and so precious that in this, in my opinion, we can have little envy of the Greeks and Latins because of the excellent poets that have been among them.’¹

There has been much diversity of opinion as to Ariosto's intention in composing the *Cinque Canti*. It is evident from the outset that, admirable in thought and in expression as many of the stanzas are, they lack the perfect style, the supreme

¹ Letter prefixed to the Aldine edition of the *Orlando Furioso*, Venice, 1545. The *Cinque Canti* here follow the *Orlando* with a new title-page. They were reprinted in the following year separately by Bernardino Giunti, Florence, 1546. Gabriel Giolito republished the *Cinque Canti* in a less imperfect form (but omitting the first stanza of the Aldine edition) with his edition of the *Orlando Furioso*, Venice, 1548, with the same title as in the Aldine.

harmony and finish, that we find in the *Orlando* itself. Virginio Ariosti and Antonio Manuzio clearly believed that they formed part of an entirely new poem, to continue the matter of the *Furioso* as that had done the matter of the *Innamorato*; and the same view was taken by Pigna, who says that this new poem was to follow the *Orlando* as the *Odyssey* does the *Iliad*. Giovio—in the fragmentary work already quoted, written between the publication of the second and third editions of the *Furioso*—states that a volume was expected from the poet to crown his former poem, and in which he would surpass himself. At first sight, this would seem the most plausible explanation, as we find the whole action taking place at an epoch subsequent to that of the *Furioso*; the war with Spain and Africa is a thing of the past; Agramante is dead; Orlando is sane again and heart-whole; Bradamante is the wife of Ruggiero, who, however, is a landless knight as before, and not the King of the Bulgarians as we had left him at the end of the epic. Girolamo Ruscelli, on the other hand, says that, when Galasso Ariosti showed him his brother's papers, he discovered that these cantos followed immediately after the *Orlando*, and were a portion of a larger design for the continuation of the poem. Ariosto, he says, intended the *Furioso* to run to fifty cantos, and to bring it down to the murder of Ruggiero and the defeat of the Paladins at Roncesvalles. From this, however, Bembo and others dissuaded him, on the grounds that this would make the book excessively long, that it would depart from the example of Homer and Virgil by bringing the chief characters to a tragic end, and especially that the battle of Roncesvalles had already been treated by Pulci in the *Morgante Maggiore*. These cantos, Ruscelli assures us, are portions of this rejected material, and, though Galasso had told him that the poet had expressed his intention of ultimately using them for another poem, he is certain that he would have been most indignant at their publication in this unfinished form.¹ A third view is propounded by Giraldi, who was engaged in a bitter quarrel with Pigna about the priority of their rival treatises on romantic poetry, and probably regarded Ruscelli as an adherent of the enemy.

¹ Cf. Ruscelli's Preface to the *Orlando Furioso* of 1556.

He declares that Ariosto had often told him that he was keeping these five cantos not to continue, but to make yet another edition of the *Furioso*, into which they would be inserted in the same way as he had inserted the additional cantos into the second edition which were not in the first.¹

The discovery by Antonio Cappelli of a stanza, directly connecting the beginning of the *Cinque Canti* with the middle of the last canto of the *Orlando*, has led to a general acceptance of what may be called a compromise between the theories of Ruscelli and Giral di.² It seems most probable that, when, after his return from the Garfagnana, Ariosto resumed work upon the *Orlando*, he at first intended to make a new poem out of it, bringing the story down to the murder of Ruggiero by Gano of Maganza and his crew (which was a part of the design of Boiardo also) and the death of Orlando at the battle of Roncesvalles, probably in fifty cantos. This plan he soon abandoned, contenting himself with perfecting the style and diction of his original poem, with the insertions and additions, especially the obstacles put by the family of Montalbano in the way of the marriage of Ruggiero and Bradamante, which we have already considered. The *Cinque Canti* are thus the sole survivors of the poet's design for an amplification of the *Orlando Furioso*, anterior to and different from the amplification which he actually effected in the edition of 1532.³ There still remains the difficulty of seeing how the marriage of Ruggiero and Bradamante would have been fitted in, and the fact—which, however, is perhaps rather of the subjective order—that the spirit and intonation of these cantos seem different from that of the rest of the poem.

Pio Rajna has remarked: 'The so-called *Cinque Canti*, written after the *Furioso* in its first form was completed and published, have a graver, more solemn, in a word, more epical progress than the work that they, it seems, were originally intended to amplify.' And he even finds in them a connecting-link, as it were, between the *Orlando* of Messer Lodovico and

¹ *Discorso de' Romanzi*, ed. cit., i. p. 140. By 'second' edition, Giral di always means the (third) edition of 1532.

² Cappelli, *Lettere di Lodovico Ariosto*, pp. 347, 348.

³ For the whole question, see the excellent study of Luigi Bonollo, *I Cinque Canti di Lodovico Ariosto*.

the *Gerusalemme Liberata* of Torquato Tasso.¹ This, I think, is more or less true of all Ariosto's additions to the earlier form of the great poem; but it certainly is most marked in these *Cinque Canti*. Indeed, the only element of comedy still remaining is the episode of the swallowing of Ruggiero by Alcina's gigantic whale, with the usual japing appeal to the authority of Turpin for the amazing conditions under which the prisoners in the monster's interior carry on their life. But, even here, the devout and religious conversation of Ruggiero and Astolfo—which is apparently to be taken seriously—is in a very different vein, and strikes the reader as almost out of place.² Astolfo's gross betrayal of the honour of his vassal is as unlike his usual chivalrous, madcap character, as is the bitterness and evident sincerity of his repentance. All the characters, indeed, have grown more serious since the days of the *Furioso*. Orlando himself, the steadfast champion of the Empire, and Rinaldo, the rebellious Paladin, have returned to the types that they presented in the old romances.

The fantastic Council of the Fays in the palace of Demogorgon, from which the whole action proceeds (and which Galileo professed to regard as superior to the Council of the Devils in Canto iv. of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*), brings us back to Boiardo and the *Innamorato*; but it is designed as the prelude to deadly and tragical business. The jealousy of Gano of Poitiers and the suspicion of Desiderio of Pavia 'are serious things' that make the English reader think of Charles Lamb's famous words on the weird sisters in *Macbeth*: 'their presence cannot co-exist with mirth.' The wars to which they lead, the siege of Prague, the rebellion of Rinaldo, the desperate conflict between his forces and the army of Orlando, are related in grim earnestness by the poet. Already are the seeds sown that will bear fruit in the fearful day of Roncesvalles, from which Orlando's horn will thunder out so terribly that the sound will reverberate all through the shadowy Middle Ages to find an echo still in the *Inferno* of Dante.

Indeed, the representations of Envy and Suspicion that Ariosto gives us in the first two cantos are as powerfully

¹ *Le Fonti*, p. 38.

² Canto iv. 75-84. But against this we must set the evidently intentional profanity of Canto iii. 21, 22, and the cynicism of Canto ii. 113, 114.

imaginative and as horribly vivid as any allegorical pictures in the whole field of literature. The latter, especially, is an almost Dantesque conception. An abominable tyrant, after a life tormented by continual suspicions and soul-deadening precautions against assassination, was murdered by his own wife with his own sword, and his soul went down to Hell:—

‘E Rhadamanto, giudice del loco,
Tutto il cacciò sotto il bollente stagno ;
Dove non pianse e non gridò : i’ mi cuoco ;
Come gridava ogn’ altro suo compagno ;
E la pena mostrò curar sì poco,
Che disse il giustitiere : io te la cagno ;
E lo mandò ne le più oscure cave,
Ov’ è un martir d’ogni martir più grave.

‘Nè quivi parve anchor che si dogliesse ;
E domandato, disse la cagione :
Che, quando egli vivea, tanto l’ oppresse
E tal gli diè il Sospetto afflittione
(Che nel capo quel giorno se gli messe,
Che si fece Signor contra ragione),
Che sol hora il pensar d’ esserne fuore
Sentir non gli lasciava altro dolore.

‘Si consigliaro i saggi de l’ Inferno,
Come potesse haver degno tormento ;
Chè saria contra l’ istituto eterno,
Se peccator la giù stesse contento ;
E di novo mandarlo al caldo e al verno
Concluso fu da tutto il parlamento ;
E di novo al Sospetto in preda darlo,
Ch’ entrasse in lui senza più mai lasciarlo.

‘Così di novo entrò il Sospetto in questa
Alma, e di se e di lui fece tutt’ uno,
Come in ceppo salvatico s’ inesta
Pomo diverso, e’l nespilo su’l pruno ;
O di molti colori un color resta,
Quando un pittor ne piglia di ciascuno
Per imitar la carne, e ne riesce
Un differente a tutti quei che mesce.’¹

¹ ‘And Rhadamanthus, judge of the place, hurled him down all under the boiling pool, where he nor wept nor cried : I am burning ; as all his companions were crying ; and he showed so little reck of the pain, that the Doomsman said : I will give thee a change ; and sent him into the darkest depths, where there is a torment worse than all torments.

‘Nor here again seemed he to complain ; and questioned, he told the cause :

The suspicious tyrant has become Suspicion itself. The story brings Ariosto back to that independent judgment of the rulers of Italy, which he had sometimes lost since the free days of his early Latin poems :—

‘ O beati gli regni a chi un huom franco
E sciolto da ogni colpa habbi a dar legge !
Così infelici anchora e miserandi,
Ove un’ ingiusto, ove un crudel commandi ;

‘ Che sempre accresca e più gravi la soma,
Come in Italia molti a’ giorni nostri,
De’ quali il biasmo in questo e l’ altro idioma
Faran sentir ancho i futuri inchiostri ;
Che migliori non son che Gaio a Roma,
O Neron fosse, o fosser gli altri mostri ;
Ma se ne tace, perchè è sempre meglio
Lasciar i vivi, e dir del tempo veglio.’¹

And, a little further on, we find him inveighing against the mercenary soldiers—*la mercenaria mal fida canaglia*—in terms but little removed from those he had employed in the rejected stanzas of his *Ad Philiroem*. For Messer Lodovico, the days of adulation are over, and he can once more speak out plainly as in his youth, remembering still those golden times of Ferrara in the fifteenth century, for the sports and pageants

that, when he lived, so much did Suspicion oppress him and such affliction gave him (which entered his head the day that he made himself lord against right), that now only to think of being out of it did not let him feel any other sorrow.

‘ The Sages of Hell took counsel how he could have worthy torment ; for it would be against the eternal decree, if sinner should be content down there ; and it was concluded by all the parliament to send him again to summer and winter, and to give him again as prey to Suspicion, to enter him and never leave him more.

‘ So again did Suspicion enter this soul, and of itself and of him it made one thing, as diverse fruit is grafted upon a wild stock and the medlar on the thorn ; or as one colour remains from many, when a painter takes from each to imitate the flesh, and there results one different from all those he mixes’ (Canto ii. 13-16. These stanzas are not in the Aldine edition).

¹ ‘ O blessed are the realms to which an upright and blameless man has to give law ! So unhappy in turn and pitiable are those where an unjust or a cruel holds sway ;

‘ Who ever increases and presses down the burden, like many in Italy in our days, whose blame even future pens shall make heard in this and in other tongues ; for they are not better than Caius at Rome, or than Nero or the other monsters were. But there is silence about them, because it is always better to leave the living and speak of the olden time’ (Canto ii. 4-5).

of which, under the sceptre of Borso and the first Ercole, he sighs :—

‘Chi si ricorda il dì di san Giovanni,
Che sotto Hercole o Borso era sì allegro ?
Che poi veduto non habbiam molt’ anni,
Come nè anchora altro piacere integro,
Di poi che cominciar gli assidui affanni
De i quali è in tutta Italia ogni core egro :
Parlo del dì che si facea contesa
Di saettar dinanzi a la sua chiesa.

‘Quel dì inanzi a la chiesa del Battista,
Si ponean tutti i sagittari in schiera ;
Nè colpo uscia, fin ch’ al bersaglio vista
La saetta del Principe non era ;
Poi con la nobiltà la plebe mista
L’ aria di frecce a gara facea nera.’¹

¹ ‘Who remembers the day of St. John, that was so merry under Borso and Ercole, which we have not seen for many years since (nor yet any other pleasure entire, after the continuous agonies began of which every heart in all Italy is sick)? I speak of the day when the contest of archery was played before his church.

‘That day in front of the Baptist’s church, all the archers were drawn up in ranks, but no shaft sped forth until the arrow of the Prince was seen on the target. Then the people mixed with the nobles in rivalry made the air black with darts’ (Canto ii. 120, 121).

CHAPTER XIII

ARIOSTO'S COMEDIES

It was given to Ariosto, in addition to being the greatest epic poet of his century and one of the few genuine lyrists among the Italians of his day, to occupy the first post in the literature of Italy as a writer of comedies. At one solitary point, indeed, Machiavelli was to surpass him as a dramatist by the sheer dreadful satiric power of his *Mandragola*; but this came later than Ariosto's earlier comedies, and is less inspired by the true comic spirit than are they. Messer Lodovico may be said to stand forth as a pioneer in this field; his first comedy is probably the first regular Italian comedy composed after the model of the Latin comedians, his second is most certainly the first comedy that applies their form and methods to modern life.

The Italian comedy of the Renaissance is a purely artificial, mainly imitative form of art. Starting from Plautus and Terence, it attempts to adapt their plots and characters to the actual conditions of the life that the modern poets saw around them, and to make the Comic Muse of ancient Rome put on the garb of sixteenth century Italy. 'Although it cannot be called a national comedy,' writes a modern Italian critic, 'still it gives us a faithful representation of the moral state of Italy in that time; not, it is true, through the characters that it puts upon the scenes, but as it were incidentally, in the dialogues of the personages, especially in the monologues, and in the phrases scattered here and there. If the duty of the theatre be, as Hamlet says, to show the very age and body of the time his form and pressure, certainly none would fulfil it better than the Italian comedy of the sixteenth century. For the historian it is an inexhaustible source of details, a living picture of the customs and familiar life of the Italians of that

time.'¹ In his later comedies Ariosto, like Machiavelli, goes further than this, in the modernity of the characters that he brings upon the stage, and in the direct transcripts that he gives us at intervals from the actual life of his times. That the bent of Italian comedy is satirical has frequently been stated. At times, indeed, the satire is more in evidence than in those fascinating poetical epistles to which the name *Satire* was given. It is, however, a satire kept as a rule in check, subdued to suit the ears of the courtly audience before which the comedies of the Renaissance were played.

At the beginning of March, 1508, in the Carnival, Ariosto's first comedy was played before the Court, at the command of Ippolito d'Este. 'On Monday evening,' writes Bernardino Prosperi to the Marchesana Isabella, 'the Cardinal had a comedy performed, which was composed by Messer Lodovico Ariosto, his familiar, and rendered in the form of a farce or merry jape, the which from beginning to end was as elegant and as delightful as any other that I have ever seen played, and it was much commended on every side. The subject was a most beautiful one of two youths enamoured of two harlots who had been brought to Taranto by a pander, and in it there were so many intrigues and novel incidents and so many fine moralities and various things that in those of Terence there are not half of them; for the parts were cast to honourable and good actors, all from without, with most beautiful costumes and sweet melodies for interludes, and with a morris-dance of cooks heated with wine, with earthen pots tied in front of them, who beat time with their wooden sticks to the sound of the Cardinal's music. But what has been best in all these festivities and representations has been the scenery in which they have been played, which Maestro Peregrino, the Duke's painter, has made.'² It has been a view in perspective of a town with houses, churches, belfries and gardens, such that one could never tire of looking at it, because of the different

¹ V. de Amicis, *L'imitazione classica nella Commedia Italiana del secolo decimosesto*, pp. 76, 77. Cf. the admirable remarks of Villari in his *Machiavelli*, ii. pp. 140 *et seq.*

² This Maestro Peregrino is the Friulan painter, Pellegrino da San Daniele, then much employed in the Duke's service. We see from this that the same scenery was used for all the dramatic performances of this Carnival, including Tebaldeo's *Daphne*. Cf. *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara*, pp. 513-515.

things that are there, all most cleverly designed and executed. I suppose that this will not be destroyed, but that they will preserve it to use on other occasions.’¹

The music and the scenery have clearly so monopolised Messer Bernardino’s attention that he has changed Mitylene, the real scene of the play, to Taranto, and been quite needlessly severe on the character of the two girls, Eulalia and Corisca. The *Cassaria* (the title thus fashioned to resemble the *Aulularia*, *Mostellaria*, and the like) in this, the earlier of the two versions, is all in prose with the exception of the prologue. In its characters and its plot, even in many of the details, it is a free imitation of the comedies of Plautus and Terence; but the author in his prologue thinks it necessary to make some sort of apology for his innovations:—

‘Nova Comedia v’ appresento, piena
 Di varii giochi ; che nè mai latine,
 Nè greche lingue recitano in scena.
 Parni veder che la più parte incline
 A riprenderla, subito c’ ho detto
 Nova, senza ascoltarne mezzo o fine ;
 Chè tale impresa non gli par soggetto
 Delli moderni ingegni, e solo stima
 Quel che gli antiqui han detto esser perfetto.
 È ver che nè volgar prosa nè rima
 Ha paragon con prose antique o versi,
 Nè pari è l’ eloquentia a quella prima :
 Ma l’ ingegni non son però diversi
 Da quel che fur ; ch’ anchor per quello Artista
 Fansi, per cui nel tempo indietro fersi.’²

For the rest, the play is a rollicking piece of work, full of comical intrigues and cross-purposes, while the lovesick youths,

¹ Letter of March 8, 1508. Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 48, 49.

² ‘I present you a new comedy, full of various sports ; which nor Latin nor Greek tongues ever recited on the stage. I seem to see the majority inclined to blame it, as soon as I have said *new*, without listening to the middle or end ; for such an undertaking seems to them not a subject for modern wits, and they only deem what the ancients have composed to be perfect. True it is that neither vernacular prose nor rhyme can compare with classic prose or verse, nor is our eloquence equal to that of old ; but our wits are not therefore different from what they were ; for still are they made by that Artist, by whom they were made in the past.’ I follow mainly the edition of the prose *Cassaria* printed in Rome in 1525.

For a portion of Ariosto’s debt in the *Cassaria* to Plautus and Terence—especially to the *Mostellaria*, *Andria*, and *Heautontimorumenos*—see Flamini, *Il Cinquecento*, pp. 266, 267.

Erofilo and Caridoro, with their sharp-witted, knavish servants, contrive to rescue the two captive girls from the clutches of the vile pander Lucramo, and to involve the rich old merchant Crisobolo, Erofilo's father, in their devices. The solemn rebuke administered by the latter to his son, in the last act, stands curiously out from the rest of the piece, and we have already referred to the tradition that Lodovico has here eternalised the scene that had actually passed between his own father and himself in his youth. It grates upon our modern sensibilities that, after his professed repentance, the son should still be deceiving his father to the end—but, perhaps, this is to take Messer Lodovico's comic world too seriously.

Be that as it may, there is one passage that must have struck painfully upon the ears of the Duchess Lucrezia, who was doubtless present, and have brought back hideous memories of her buried past. Trappola, in search of Lucramo, pretends to have forgotten his name and not to know that it is the very man with whom he is speaking. He will point him out by his character, and paints a monstrous conglomeration of every low and degrading vice, to which the pander cynically and unblushingly pleads guilty. 'If we were in the Court of Rome, one could be in doubt as to whom you are seeking; but here, in Mitylene, you can only be looking for me.'¹ We can well imagine the burst of laughter that drowned the end of the sentence, and the Cardinal himself the loudest in his appreciation of so palpable a hit.

In the Carnival of 1509 in Ferrara, Ariosto won an even greater dramatic success than in that of the preceding year. 'On Tuesday evening,' wrote Bernardino Prosperi to the Marchesana Isabella, 'the most reverend Cardinal had his comedy represented, composed by Messer Lodovico Ariosto; an entirely modern comedy, all delightful, and full of moralities and words and deeds that raised great laughter, with three-fold deceptions or substitution of persons. The argument was recited by the composer himself, and the plot is capital and right well suited to our habits and fashions, for he represents the case as having happened in Ferrara. But I imagine that your Ladyship has heard about it, and therefore I will not tell

¹ Act iii. Sc. 3.

it you again at length. The interludes were all songs and music, and, at the end of the comedy, Vulcan and the Cyclopes forged arrows to the sound of the pipes, beating time with their hammers and with little bells that they had at their legs; and while they forged the arrows and plied their bellows, they danced a morris-dance with the hammers.’¹

The play in question is the *Suppositi*—the ‘Substituted’ or ‘Supposed’—in its first prose form.² In the prologue—which the poet himself recited and which, we must add, is disfigured by what were known as *bisticci aromatici*, to wit, equivoques of the most obscene description—Ariosto, speaking of himself in the third person, confesses that he has followed Plautus and Terence: ‘for, not only in the customs, but also in the arguments of his fables, he wishes to imitate the ancient and celebrated poets, to the utmost of his power; and as they in their Latin comedies followed Menander and Apollodorus and the other Greeks, so he in his vernacular comedies would not shun the modes and processes of the Latin writers. As I tell you, he has copied part of the argument of his *Suppositi* from the *Eunuchus* of Terence and from the *Captivi* of Plautus, but so modestly withal, that Terence and Plautus themselves, if they heard of it, would not take it ill, and would call it poetical imitation rather than theft.’

It must be admitted that this acknowledgment by no means covers the whole of the poet’s debt to Terence and Plautus, and the *Eunuchus* and *Captivi* are not the only comedies of theirs that he has laid under contribution. But, nevertheless, taking the play as a whole, this imitation of the ancients amounts to little, when the *Suppositi* is compared with the *Cassaria* in this respect. Whereas the previous play was little more than a vernacular copy of the Latin comedies, the new work is, as Bernardino Prosperi noted, a genuinely modern production. Instead of the Greek town in some vague classical epoch, we have Ferrara somewhere between 1488 and 1493—the very time in which Messer Lodovico himself first knew the city of the Estensi before his father set

¹ Letter of February 8, 1509. Campori, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

² *Supposes* in the English version: ‘*Supposes*: A Comedie written in the Italian tongue by Ariosto, Englished by George Gascoigne of Greis Inne esquire, and there presented, 1566.’

him free from the trammels of the law.¹ Instead of the sharp-witted slaves with their knavish pranks, we see the students and doctors of the University in their long gowns, and merchants from Siena or Catania land at the quays and pass up those very streets through which we wander to-day; there are modern japes at the expense of the corrupt ducal officials and the aggressive customhouse officers, though, of course, it is expressly stated that there is *sopra tutto un principe giustissimo*. The 'substitution' motives are clearly borrowed from Plautus and Terence, as the poet admits; the recognition of the lost son, in the last act, and many other particulars, may be regarded as similarly lifted; but the only typical character of Latin comedy that remains is that of the Parasite, Pasofilo—and even he, as we learn from Dante and Boccaccio, was a type not entirely unknown in Italy at a date not so very far removed from that of Ariosto. The plot no longer turns on the carrying off of two beautiful girl slaves, but on the rival claims of suitors for the hand of a young lady in marriage.² Erostrato, the son of Filogono, a rich and noble merchant of Sicily, coming to Ferrara to study at the University, is enamoured at first sight of Polimnesta, whom he met by chance in the Via Grande immediately after his landing; 'and of such vehemence was this love of his,' says the girl to her nurse (who will hardly stand the comparison, which, for an English reader, she inevitably suggests, with the nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*), 'that at once he changed his plans, and threw aside his books and his long robes, and decided that I alone should be his study.' In order to be near her, he disguises himself and enters her father's house as a servant, while his own attendant, Dulipo, takes his place and cuts a fine figure as a wealthy

¹ The imaginary epoch is fixed from the fact that sufficient years have passed since the sack of Otranto in 1480 for a boy, who was then five or six years old, to be now a young man studying at the University (Act v. Sc. 5); while, on the other hand, King Ferrante is reigning in Naples (Act ii. Sc. 1), and, in the later version, the Duchess Leonora is spoken of as living.

² So, in effect, Gaspary, p. 74. For a very different view of Ariosto's originality, and a list of his borrowings, see Guido Marpillero, in the *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, xxxi. pp. 291-310, who goes so far as to declare the *Suppositi* 'a mosaic of many pieces, of which the chief are taken from comedies quite different from the *Eunuchus* and the *Captivi*.' Cf. Flamini, *op. cit.*, p. 268. It has been suggested by Campanini, *Lodovico Ariosto nei prologhi delle sue Commedie*, pp. 62-71, that the prose prologue of the *Suppositi* is a mutilation of what Ariosto really wrote in verse.

student and young man of fashion. But Cleandro, an old and wealthier doctor of the University, an exile from Otranto, seeks the girl's hand; to prevent him gaining over her father, Dulipo, disguised as Erostrato, comes forward as a suitor to outbid him, while the real Erostrato has already gained her heart and person. A Sienese gentleman, passing through Ferrara, is induced to play the part of father to the pseudo-Erostrato and to back his pretensions; when all plans are disconcerted by the simultaneous discovery by Damon of the intrigue between his daughter and his supposed servant, and the arrival of the real Filogono on the scenes. Imagining that Dulipo has made away with Erostrato, Filogono employs Cleandro to get up his case against him, and the discovery by Cleandro that Dulipo is his own son, lost in his childhood at the sack of Otranto, solves all difficulties. Filogono will make amends to Damon by consenting to the marriage of the real Erostrato with Polimnesta; Cleandro is left more than content in his new-found happiness in the recovery of his son and heir; and even the parasite is satisfied at the prospect of unlimited good cheer. The characterisation of the piece is decidedly superficial; but it is well-constructed, the dialogue flashes and sparkles with wit, the action moves briskly, and it is written with an exuberance of spirit throughout. Here, again, a characteristic of Ariosto appears, in that a graver note is struck in the relations of father and son; the affection of Filogono for his Erostrato is drawn with truth and tenderness.

A few days later in the same month, some Terentian comedies were similarly played before the Duke at the Cardinal's orders, including the *Phormio*, provided with 'a new beginning and a new end'—that is, a prologue and an epilogue. There seem good grounds for holding that the translations were in part the work of Ariosto himself; but neither of these nor of any other of the versions of Terence and Plautus, which he undoubtedly executed at one time or another, but which he himself held in small account, have we any fragments surviving.¹

¹ Cf. Campori, *op. cit.*, pp. 50, 51, and Pigna in the later edition of his life of the poet.

Ten years now pass before we hear any thing more of Messer Lodovico's comedies. In the meanwhile, the *Calandria* of Bernardo da Bibbiena (which had, perhaps, been originally written before either the *Cassaria* or *Suppositi*) had been performed at Urbino on February 6, 1513. It is little more than an imitation of the *Menæchmi*, with the sex of one of the twins changed. 'It would serve Plautus quite right if he were robbed,' wrote Castiglione, in the prologue which he improvised to take the place of the author's which came too late, 'because the silly fellow keeps his things without a key and without taking any care of them.'¹ It was played again in 1514 at the Vatican, in the presence of Pope Leo, in honour of the Marchesana Isabella, with scenery specially painted by Baldassare Peruzzi. Machiavelli wrote his *Mandragola* shortly after 1512. Both these comedies, like the two of Ariosto, are in prose. 'Since comedy represents to you things done and said in familiar fashion,' said Castiglione in the prologue to the *Calandria*, 'the author has not thought fit to use verse, considering that one speaks in prose, with words free and not bound.'

On March 6, 1519, the Sunday of the Carnival, Ariosto's *Suppositi* was played in Rome before the Pope, in the apartments in the Apostolic Palace of the nephew of his Holiness, Cardinal Innocenzo Cibo. Alfonso Paolucci was among those present, and has left us a vivid account of the proceedings in a letter to Duke Alfonso.²

His Holiness himself stood at the door to superintend the admission of the guests, letting in with his benediction those whom he thought proper—about two thousand in all. On the curtain was painted the Pope's Dominican jester or buffoon, Fra Mariano, sporting with devils, with the inscription: *Questi sono li capricci di Fra Mariano*: 'These are the japeries of Fra Mariano.' Then, to the music of the pipers, the curtain fell, and revealed a beautiful scene of a city in

¹ For the two prologues to the *Calandria*, see I. del Lungo, *Florentia* (Florence, 1897), pp. 363-378.

² Letter of March 8, 1519. Campori, *Notizie inedite di Raffaello da Urbino*, pp. 126-129; Cappelli, *Lettere di Lodovico Ariosto*, Document 16. Another account (in which Ariosto is not named) is given in a letter from Ser Tomà Lippomano in Sanudo, xxvii. col. 73, where it is stated that the Pope gave Cibo a thousand ducats for the expenses of the performance.

perspective, representing the Ferrara of the play, painted by Raphael himself,¹ which the Pope peered at through his eye-glass and greatly admired. The stage was lit by candelabra supporting torches forming letters, each letter made by five torches, and spelling 'Leo Decimus Pontifex Maximus.' At the obscene equivoques of the prologue, the Pope laughed heartily, but the foreigners were scandalised. The comedy was played in the usual style of the epoch, with singing and music between the acts, and at the end there was a *moresca* representing the Fable of the Gorgon, which, says Paolucci, 'was very fine, but not given with the perfection with which I have seen such things represented in your Lordship's hall.' In the crush and confusion after the performance, the poor Ferrarese nearly had his leg broken; but he got 'a large benediction with a genial look' from the Pope for his pains. Passing in the company of Lanfranco Spinola, the envoy of Margaret of Flanders, through the rooms where the supper was prepared, Paolucci met the Cardinals Ercole Rangone and Giovanni Salviati. 'Ah,' said Rangone, repeating the pun upon Ariosto's city from the play, '*vostra fè rara*.'² 'Quite so, Monsignor,' answered Paolucci, 'rare faith is what is famous and precious.' This being an implied thrust at the conduct of the Rangoni in Modena, Salviati instantly turned the conversation by saying that all beautiful inventions came from Ferrara.

'And then we spoke of Messer Lodovico Ariosto and of his great worth in this art. Afterwards, Messer Lanfranco and I went away together; and, speaking about this comedy, he complained that words that were not honest should be recited in the presence of such great majesty; and, in good sooth, in that prologue there are some words that are highly spiced.'

This prologue has not been preserved. We gather from

¹ In a letter dated Rome, the last day of February, 1519, Girolamo Bagnacavallo (a servant of Cardinal Cibo) writes to Duke Alfonso: 'At present Raphael is occupied with the mounting of the comedy of Messer Lodovico Ariosto, which my most Reverend intends to represent.' (A. Venturi, in the *Kunstfreund*, Berlin, 1885, col. 327.) Lippomano (*loc. cit.*) says that the scene represented 'Ferrara precise come la è.'

² Cf. Act iv. Scenes 6 and 7, where the joke is evidently suggested by the similar punning about Epidamnus in *Menaechmi*, Act ii. Scene 1.

Paolucci's letter that it stated that 'Ferrara had come thither under the protection of Cibo, to show that it was worth no less than Mantua, which had been brought in the preceding year by Santa Maria in Portico'—the reference being to some comedy (which has not been identified with certainty) presented by Cardinal Bibbiena a year before, the scene of which was apparently laid in Mantua. The jest, however, that amused the Pope and scandalised the foreigners is manifestly the same that we still read in both the extant prologues—and of which the less said the better.

It appears more probable that this version of the *Suppositi*, though with a new prologue, was the original prose version that had been played in Ferrara ten years before; and the same applies to the *Cassaria*, about which we find Ariosto writing a few months later to the young Marchese Federigo Gonzaga, who had been induced by the success of the Roman performance of the *Suppositi* to ask its author for the companion comedy: 'I send your Excellence my *Cassaria*, more to obey all that you command me than because I reckon it a thing worthy to go into your hands. I have delayed somewhat in sending it, because I have not had immediately any one to transcribe it for me. Whatsoever it be, let your Excellence accept it with that benignity with which you are wont to see my other follies.'¹ But, about this time, Messer Lodovico hit upon a peculiarly happy innovation, inventing a new comic metre, an ingenious compromise between prose and verse—the *verso sdrucciolo*, the line of normally twelve syllables, which is practically blank verse ending in a dactyl. By this means he thought to reproduce the trimeter iambic of the Latin comedians.² In this, in his hands admirably effective rhythm, he wrote the rest of his comedies, beginning with the *Negromante*.

In spite of the increasingly strained relations between

¹ Letter xv., dated Ferrara, June 6, 1519. It will be remembered that, when the *Cassaria* was first performed in 1508, Federigo was only a child.

² Cf. Pigna, and Carducci, *op. cit.*, p. 193. Ariosto himself called these verses *jambi volgari*, says Mosti, *op. cit.*, p. 180. For a somewhat analogous experiment in modern English poetry—though we are told that 'its correspondence with the Latin comic trimeter iambic is an accident'—the reader will turn to Mr. Robert Bridges, *The Feast of Bacchus*.

Rome and Ferrara, the Pope, when the Carnival of the following year drew near, did not refrain from asking Ariosto for another comedy, through the poet's brother, Galasso Ariosti, who, as an ecclesiastic (attached to the household of Cardinal Cibo), was still following the Court of Rome.

'Most blessed Father,' wrote Lodovico, 'when my brother Galasso, some days ago, gave me to understand that your Holiness would like me to send you a comedy of mine that I have on my hands; I, seeing that for a long time I had put it aside, being almost disposed not to finish it, because verily it was not turning out as I desired, have been somewhat in doubt, whether I should plead the excuse of not having finished it, and that there was little time left me to finish it for recitation at this Carnival (and this for fear of the judgment of these learned men of Rome, and, more than of the others, of that of your Holiness, for its defects will be right well perceived, nor will my excuse of having done it in haste be admitted); or whether I should finish it as best I could, and send it, trusting and reckoning that no one else would know what I knew. Finally, thinking that I should be too much wanting in my duty and ungrateful for the very great obligations that I have to your Holiness, if I did not satisfy all your wishes, even if I should be reputed of small judgment therefrom; because, perhaps, my excuse, though true, would not be accepted; I chose to do everything to send it, and rather be accused of ignorance or little diligence, than of disobedience and ingratitude; and so I at once took it in hand again. And so much has the fact of it being asked of me in the name of your Holiness wrought upon me, that I have now finished, in two or three days, what I could not do in ten years since the first idea of it came to me; but not, however, that it entirely satisfies me, or that there are not parts of it which make me tremble in the very soul, when I think to what criticism it is to be presented. Still, whatever it be, I give it to your Holiness together with myself. If you judge it worthy of your audience, my comedy will have better fortune than I hope for it; if, however, it be reckoned otherwise, you can at least take the same amusement in it as you were wont to get from the compositions of

Baraballo; for, as long as in some way it pleases you, I shall consider myself contented.'¹

The comedy in question was the *Negromante*, thus finished in haste for the Roman Carnival of 1520, and furnished with a characteristically genial yet satirical prologue. Let it no more seem strange or wonderful that stones and trees should have followed Orpheus, or the stones mounted to build the walls of Thebes or the city of Troy at the strains of Apollo and Amphion; since in the last Carnival they saw Ferrara entire come to Rome, and to-day Cremona has come in like fashion:—

'Nè vi crediate già che la necessità
A venir, che si voglia d'homicidii,
Di voti, o di tai cose far assolvere;
Perchè non ha bisogno; e quando havutolo
Havesse, haria sperato che 'l Pontefice
Liberal le haverebbe l'indulgentia
Fatta mandar fin a casa, plenaria;
E se pur non in dono, per un prezzo
Che più costan quì al maggio le carciofole:
Ma vien sol per conoscer in presentia,
Veder e contemplar con gli occhi proprii
Quel che portato le ha la fama celebre,
De la bontade, del candor de l'animo,
De la religion, de la prudentia,
De l'alta cortesia, del splendor inclito,
De la somma virtù di Leon Decimo.
E, perch' ella non v' habbia meno ad essere
Grata che fusse Ferrara e piacevole,
Non è venuta senza una Comedia
Tutta nuova, la qual vuol che si nomini
Il Negromante, e c' hoggi a voi si reciti.'²

¹ Letter xix., dated Ferrara, January 16, 1520.

² 'You must not think that she is compelled to come, by desire of being absolved from murders, vows, or things of that kind; for she has no need; and, if she had needed it, she would have hoped that the liberal Pontiff would have had a plenary indulgence sent her even to her home; if not as a gift, still for a price than which cauliflowers cost more here in May. But she comes solely to know in presence, to see and contemplate with her own eyes what renowned fame has carried to her, of the goodness, the candour of soul, the religion, the prudence, the lofty courtesy, the glorious splendour, the supreme virtue of Leo the Tenth. And, that she may not prove less welcome and acceptable here than did Ferrara, she has not come without a comedy, all new, which she wishes to be called the *Negromante* and to be recited to you to-day.' This prologue was printed in the edition of the

The central figure of the play—which invites comparison with Ben Jonson's *Alchemist*—is one of those arch-impostors who were among the minor pests of the corrupt and superstitious society of sixteenth century Italy: the professed dealer in magic arts. His is a type that Dante had taken very seriously in the *Inferno*, Fra Jacopo Passavanti had denounced from the pulpit of Santa Maria Novella, but at which Franco Sacchetti had already begun to laugh. Ariosto's Maestro Jachelino is among the vilest and basest of his unlovely species, without a trace of that preternatural horror which lends a certain dignity to the magician who raised up the devils for Benvenuto Cellini in the Colosseum a few years later. This is his portrait as described by his assistant, Nibbio:—

‘ Certes, Maestro Jachelino has an immense confidence in himself; for, while hardly able to read or write, he professes himself a philosopher, alchemist, physician, astrologer, magician, and exorciser of spirits. And of these and other sciences he knows as much as the ass and the ox know of playing the organ; although he has himself styled *the Astrologer by excellence*, even as Virgil the Poet and Aristotle the Philosopher. But with a countenance more immoveable than marble, with nonsense and lies and with no other industry, he bamboozles and deceives every one, and enjoys and makes me enjoy (folly helping us, which is so abundant in the world) the riches of others. We go like gypsies from country to country, and, wherever he passes, his traces always remain, like that of the snail, or, to find fitter comparison, like those of the hailstorm or thunderbolt; so that from town to town, to hide himself, he changes his name, dress, tongue, and country. Now he is Giovanni, now Pietro; sometimes he pretends to be a Greek, sometimes of Egypt, sometimes of Africa; and he is, to speak the truth, a Jew by origin, one of those who were hunted out of Spain. It would be long to relate how many nobles, how many plebeians, how many women, how many men, he has overreached and robbed; how many poor houses he has ruined,

Negromante published at Venice (Francesco Bindone and Mapheo Pasini), with a dedicatory letter from Lodovico Dolce to Pietro Aretino, in 1535. I quote it from that edition, excepting the lines in italics.

how many contaminated with adulteries, now pretending to make sterile women conceive, and now to extinguish the suspicions and discords that arise between husbands and wives.' ¹

He is a quack and swindler of the lowest kind, whose extravagant pretensions are only rendered plausible by the boundless credulity and folly of his dupes and victims. Here is his complete philosophy of life:—

'There are some animals from which you can get nothing useful save their flesh for food, like the pig; others there are which, if you preserve them, give you fruit every day, and, when at the last they give no more, you can sup or dine off them, like the cow, the ox, or the sheep. There are some others which, while they live, bring you in much profit, and dead are worth nothing; like the horse, the dog, and the ass. Similarly among men, we find great differences. There are some who, as they pass by, on board ship or in the inn, fall into your clutches, whom you will never see again; your duty is to plunder and rob them at once. There are others, like sellers of wine and artisans, who always have a few small coins in their purse, but never have much; it is an excellent plan to take often and little at a time from these; because if I skin them completely at once, I gain but little, and lose what can be got out of them almost every day. Others, in the cities, are very rich in houses, possessions, and great business connections. These we should delay to bite (much less devour), as long as florins can be sucked out of them, now three, now four, now ten, now twelve. But when you want at the last to change your quarters, or some unwonted opportunity comes to you, then shear them even to the quick and fleece them.' ²

The situation, upon which the whole comedy hangs, is one that cannot be particularised without some offence to our modern conventions. Suffice it to say that all parties are attempting to have a certain marriage either effectuated or annulled, and Maestro Jachelino is scheming to plunder the whole lot impartially. The dialogue is sparkling and life-like, as in the best of Ariosto's work, the conduct of the plot

¹ Act ii. Scene 1.

² Act ii. Scene 2.

is masterly, the characterisation unsympathetic and superficial. Neither of the two girls, Emilia and Lavinia, appears upon the scenes; of the two lovers, the nature of Camillo Pocosale ('Witless') is sufficiently indicated by his name, but Cintio, keeping loyal to his real bride under exceedingly trying circumstances, and unwilling to liberate himself from the maiden who is his wife only in name, at the expense of her reputation, has nobler moments. A revolting type, only too common in the comedy of the Renaissance, is the gross-minded, foul-tongued woman-servant. For the rest, we have the inevitable sharp-witted resourceful manservant, whose wiles checkmate the astrologer's devices, and the usual type of old men that Ariosto borrowed from Latin comedy. Like Latin comedy, too, is the downfall of the astrologer, and the *dénouement* (adapted to sixteenth century conditions)—the discovery that Lavinia is the long-lost daughter of the wealthy Massimo, Cintio's adopted father, born to him in exile during the Venetian occupation of Cremona.¹

Whether Pope Leo was offended at the reference in the prologue to his remarkable proceedings in the way of granting indulgences, we cannot say; but it is certain that his Holiness did not judge the *Negromante* 'worthy of his audience,' as it was not actually performed in Rome. We cannot, unfortunately, suppose that he was scandalised at the somewhat questionable plot of the play, seeing that, in the following September, he celebrated the feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian by having a comedy performed which, according to Paride de' Grassi, was more calculated to promote laughter and good digestion than to improve morals, and which may possibly have been the *Mandragola*—which Battista della Palle, writing to Machiavelli, had thought would greatly delight his Holiness.² Be that as it may, the *Negromante* was not represented until some years later at Ferrara—most probably in the Carnival of 1530—with a new prologue, a modification of the Roman one, containing a witty apology

¹ For Ariosto's borrowings in the *Negromante* from Terence's *Andria* and *Phormio*, and from various Plautine comedies, cf. Marpillero, in the *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, xxxiii. pp. 303-339, and Flamini, *op. cit.*, pp. 269, 270.

² A. d'Ancona, *Origini*, ii. p. 91.

for the identity of the scenery representing Cremona with what had stood for Ferrara in the recent performance of *La Lena*.¹

La Lena, which in many respects is a companion piece to the *Negromante*, was performed in Ferrara as a part of the festivities that followed the marriage of Ercole d'Este to Renée of France, either in December, 1528, or in the Carnival of 1529. It was played with great pomp and circumstance, Don Francesco d'Este reciting the prologue (which we have already had occasion to quote), and all the other chief parts being represented not by professional actors, but by nobles and gentlemen of the city, among whom was undoubtedly the poet himself.

It was, perhaps, fortunate that the modest young French princess, for whose welcome the performance was given, did not understand the Italian language. The *Lena* is on a lower moral plane than anything else that Messer Lodovico wrote. It is a very powerful and clever play—the cleverest, perhaps, of all the five comedies, and probably the most original of them all. It is impossible not to admire it in a sort of way; but it is the same sort of doubtful admiration as that which we accord to Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*, though the 'greatness' of *Lena*, *la ruffiana*, is exhibited in an altogether more restricted field than that of the immortal *Jonathan*. We may take her as a kind of female counterpart to Maestro Jachelino. All the characters, their thoughts, motives, and atmosphere, are sordid in the last degree; even the old men, and this is rare with Ariosto, are vile.

Withal, the play is the most realistic of Ariosto's comedies, and the most full of modern touches. It is, doubtless, an accurate study of low life in Ferrara in the twenties of the

¹ In this prologue it is stated that it is now fifteen or sixteen years (*già son quindici anni o sedici*) since Ferrara had the *Cassaria* and the *Suppositi*. This would seem to give 1524 as the date of the representation of the *Negromante* (whereas the *Lena* is known to have been first performed in 1528 or 1529); but Campanini (*op. cit.*, p. 181) assures us that *quindici anni o sedici* 'is a mode of speech still living in the Emilia, or more precisely in the dialect of Reggio, to indicate a time, passed or future, longer or shorter than the years enumerated.' For the rest, a passage in Act v. Scene 3, which implies that the period of the play is sixteen years after the League of Cambrai, shows that the version of the comedy which we possess is not quite identical with what the poet had sent to the Pope.

Cinquecento. It is full of little transcripts from the daily scenes of city life. We read of the sumptuary enactments, the game-laws, the Jewish money-lenders, and the corruption of the administration. Even the servants of Don Ercole cadge for drink and plunder. The laws exist, but the Podestà increases the penalties at his own free will, according to the means of the offender, not according to the statutes nor in proportion to his demerits. Of what use is it to the injured party to appeal to the Podestà, to the Secretaries, or even to the Duke himself? If he goes to the latter, his Excellence will simply refer him back to the Podestà. 'And the Podestà at once will cast his eyes on my hands, and, if he does not see an offering there, will make a show of having more important affairs to transact.' Those who are paid to apprehend malefactors themselves plunder, and the officials, even the Podestà, are ready to share their gains.¹ Such was the language that the poet could have recited in the very presence of the Duke himself, possibly with a serious intention; he may have wished to take this means of opening the eyes of Alfonso and Ercole to the things that were being done in their names.

The prose versions of the *Cassaria* and the *Suppositi* had fallen among thieves. They had been stolen by the actors at the time of their first representation, and had been printed by literary pirates, in a very incorrect form and to the great indignation of the poet. Ariosto now took these two earlier comedies in hand, and rewrote them in verse, the same *endecasillabo sdrucciolo*, to make them match the *Negromante* and the *Lena*.

We have, apparently, no record of the performance of the *Suppositi* in this, its second form. The reference to Marcantonio Raimondi's engravings of certain obscene designs of Giulio Romano, in the prologue, shows that it was written not earlier than 1524, and it is said to have been acted in Ferrara in 1525 or 1526;² but no definite evidence seems forthcoming. Save for the versification, this new *Suppositi*

¹ Act iv. Scene 3; Act iii. Scene 2. The *Lena* was acted again in 1531 or 1532, with the addition of two scenes, and a new prologue of a grossly indecent description.

² Cf. Campanini, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-109.

differs very little from its prose predecessor. A certain increased felicity of phraseology may, perhaps, fairly be claimed for it; but then, even as now, critics differed in opinion as to the advantage of this process of transformation.

The case of the *Cassaria* is altogether different. We gather from Ariosto's letters that he looked upon the result of his labours upon it with peculiar satisfaction. In its second form, it has been entirely renovated, expanded, and completely rewritten in the *endecasillabo sdrucciolo*, with that inimitable effect of spontaneity that Ariosto gives so magically in his comic verse:—

‘Questa Comedia, c’ hoggi recitavi
Sarà, se no’l sapete, è la *Cassaria*,
Ch’ un’ altra volta, già vent’ anni passano,
Veder si fece sopra questi pulpiti.
Et allhora assai piacque a tutto il popolo,
Ma non ne riportò già degno premio ;
Chè data in preda a gl’ importuni et avidi
Stampator fu ; li quali laceraronla,
E di lei fer ciò che lor diede l’animo ;
E poi per le botteghe e per li publichi
Mercati a chi ne volse, la venderono
Per poco prezzo ; e in modo la trattarono,
Che più non pareva quella che a principio
Esser solea. Se ne dolse ella, e fecene
Con l’autor suo più volte querimonia ;
Il qual, mosso a pietà de le miserie
Di lei, non volle al fin patir che andassino
Più troppo in lunga. A se chiamolla, e fecela
Più bella che mai fosse, e rinovatala
Ha sì, che forse alcuno che già in pratica
L’ ha havuta non la saprebbe, incontrandosi
In lei, così di botto riconoscere.
O se potesse a voi questo medesimo
Far, Donne, ch’ egli ha fatto a la sua fabula ;
Farvi più che mai belle, e rinovandovi
Tutte nel fior di vostra età rimettervi !¹

¹ ‘This comedy which to-day will be recited to you, if you know it not, is the *Cassaria*, which once before, now twenty years ago, showed herself upon these boards. And then she greatly pleased all the people, but hardly got a worthy reward for her pains ; for she was given in prey to importunate and greedy printers ; who misused her and worked their will upon her, and then through the shops and through the public markets sold her to whoso would have her, for a few pence ; and in such wise they treated her that she no more seemed what she had been at first. Thereat she bewailed, and complained many times to her author ; who, moved to pity at her miseries,

And in the satirical lines that follow, striking first the foibles of the women, and then (with a considerable addition of venom) those of the men who would fain be still taken as youthful lovers and ludicrously attempt to conceal their age (a thing lightly touched in the same spirit by Castiglione in the *Cortegiano*), there is really more pathos than malice. The poet is thinking of his own youth in the golden time of Ferrara, when he himself was as the Erofilo and Caridoro of his comedy, and is sighing for the days that have gone for ever :—

‘Se in suo arbitrio
Fosse di fare più belli e più giovani
Huomini e donne, come le sue fabule,
Havria se stesso già fatto sì giovane,
Sì bello e gratioso, che piacciutovi
Forse saria non men ch’ egli desideri
Che v’ habbia da piacer la sua *Cassaria*.’¹

In the *Cassaria*, the two girls are more prominent and more sympathetic than in Lodovico’s other comedies. They are still the slightest of sketches, but their characters are clearly discriminated, and the genuine pathos of their situation is, perhaps, more delicately indicated in this second version. The portrait of Lucramo is elaborated to make a companion picture to those of Lena and Maestro Jachelino. He still (to use our expressive English slang) gives himself away, as badly as Chaucer’s pardoner; but the scene between him and Trappola (Act iii. Scene 3) is somewhat less exaggerated, and the effective Roman jape (which would have been highly unpolitic, not to say dangerous, to have repeated on this occasion) is omitted. A new character is introduced in the shape of one of his women, Stamma (Act iii. Scene 4), to

at length would not suffer them to go on too much further. He called her to himself, and made her more fair than she had ever been, and he has so renewed her that, perchance, one who had dealt with her of old would not, if he met her, at once know her again. O if he could do the same to you, ladies, as he has done to his fable: make you more fair than ever, and by renewing you put you all back in the flower of your age!’

¹ ‘If it were in his power to make men and women younger and more beautiful, even as his fables, he would long ago have made himself so young, so fair and gracious, that, perchance, he would have pleased you not less than he desires that his *Cassaria* shall do.’

heighten the ugly features of his loathsome character; she adds a touch of sordid tragedy to the situation. Another character, Brusco, who in the former version was merely a grumbling understrapper of the cunning Trappola, becomes a simple and ill-tempered contadino, whose heart is with his cows and sheep and pigs and goats, unwillingly involved in these rascalities.

The scene has been shifted from Mitylene to Sybaris, for the sake of the verse; but the real novelty of this revised and expanded version lies in the comparative modernity of the satire. Sybaris is a mere mask for Ferrara. Caridoro's servant, Folcio, lashes the fashions of the women in the same spirit as the poet himself in the prologue and in his poetical epistle on marriage, and is no less severe upon the effeminate ways of the men: the youths of the city, 'who will have to make themselves known and honoured by the virtues,' instead of acquiring them spend their time in adorning themselves no less than do the women; they have no less complicated instruments for their toilet, are learned in scents and perfumes, and even paint their faces.¹ The most noteworthy new satirical passage is, however, a long speech put upon the lips of Lucramo in the first act; and we can well imagine the exaggerated stress that the actor laid upon the name *Sibari* when he recited the lines—in the spirit of the Elizabethan dramatist who, 'speaking of courtly toys,' protested that he meant no Court but that of Dionysius. The pander has heard at Genoa that Sybaris is the most pleasure-loving and liberal place in the world, and so has come thither:—

'Moved by the public report, I came to this town; and, when I arrived here, I rejoiced, for I heard that its young men were called gentlemen and the most part Counts, and, when they talked together, they gave each other the title of *Signor*. Said I to myself: In the other cities there is wont to be but one Signor, and none in many; now, if there is such a number of them here, surely money must flow through the streets and gold rain. But I had not been here three days when I was sorry that I had come; for, excepting titles and pretensions, ostentation and fables, I can see here little else that is

¹ Act v. Scene 3.

magnificent. All that they have they spend in adorning and decking themselves, perfuming themselves like women, and feeding mules and pages, who trot after them all day while they swagger through the streets and squares, mincing more than any coquette, and gesticulating worse than an ape. They think, by wearing fine clothes and the latest fashions, to make others value them at their own estimate, and to be taken for generous, splendid, and great men; and, verily, they are like new boxes, painted without and empty within. Perchance one will think that, if they are prodigal in adorning themselves, they then make their womenfolk use parsimony, and that these latter, keeping at home and working busily, strive to make up for what their husbands and sons consume in this silly and ridiculous ambition. On the contrary, wives and husbands, daughters and mothers, are all agreed in this ruin and destruction of their houses. Let us pass over that the women want new clothes and new headdresses, even as others do in other towns; you will not find in this town a woman (unless her husband is an artisan) who will stir a pace. They scorn to go out of doors on foot, nor will they pass through the streets unless seated in a carriage; and they want the carriages all gilded, covered with fine cloths, and tall horses to draw them; and two serving-women and a chambermaid and footmen and pages to accompany them. In madness of this kind, the poor, not less than the rich, strive their utmost, and bend the bow so tight that not a shilling is left ever to spend for any unusual desire. Hence comes it that, if a foreigner arrives in this town, he very rarely finds any one to invite him to his house and use the courtesies that are used in other towns. Whoso comes from elsewhere, and knows not how their way of life is thus restricted, supposes that they are avaricious; but he is mistaken. He should rather judge them to be prodigal, unregulated, and of little prudence. If they were avaricious, they would apply themselves to merchandise, to the other arts that make men rich. But they deem every employment vile, nor allow that one should be called noble unless he live in idleness without any industry. Nor does this suffice; needs must his father and grandfather similarly have passed their lives doing nothing. What a mistaken fashion, what a fantastic state of opinion, what a train-

ing, what goodly order is this in a wise city that would fain increase in state!’¹

But what has the speaker to do with all this? It is not his business:—

‘Viva pur e governisi
Come le par. Se non ci fosse il proprio
Mio interesse, n’havrei quella medesima
Cura c’ hanno li Vescovi de l’ anime
Che fur da Christo lor date in custodia.’²

An anti-clerical touch, which would at once put the audience in good humour with themselves and provide a more attractive game for their fancies to hunt.

This final and complete version of the *Cassaria* was represented at Ferrara, with the new scenery that Ariosto had designed and the brothers Dossi probably painted, in the Carnival of 1531, and had an unprecedented success. Ariosto himself probably recited the prologue, and, if I understand Girolamo da Sestula’s letter rightly, a special proclamation had been issued to secure the play being listened to in attentive silence—which tempts one to the conclusion that either the Duke or Don Ercole wished the satirical assault upon Ferrarese manners to be taken to heart. ‘On Sunday evening,’ wrote Girolamo to the Marchesana Isabella, ‘was played Messer Lodovico’s comedy, the *Cassaria*, the scene having been got ready. Your Ladyship knows it; but it was recited so well and so beautifully, that the delivery could not have been better. Never in my life have I heard a comedy recited in greater silence than this; not a single person was heard to make a sound, in consequence of the proclamation that was made. But this *Cassaria* is not the first; it has been lengthened and almost entirely refashioned and added to, so that it lasted four hours. I can tell you that it touches the ladies and the young men of the Court, and the old men who wish still to be young, and the princes who believe one man alone and take no heed of the others, and the

¹ Act i. Scene 5.

² ‘Let it live and conduct itself just as it thinks fit. Were it not that my own interest is involved, I should have that same care for it as the Bishops have for the souls that were given them by Christ to guard.

officials. I say that it seems to me that nothing can come near it.'¹

Ariosto thus began and ended his career as a dramatist with the *Cassaria*. Among his contemporaries, Pigna and Giraldi, who disagree about most other things, agree in considering it as not only the best of his comedies, but the best comedy by far of the age. Giraldi holds that it will stand the comparison with all the Latin comedies, and especially praises it for its natural solution. On the same grounds, he puts the *Lena* second, and criticises the *Suppositi* and *Negromante* because of the little verisimilitude of their plots.² To the countrymen of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, the Italian comedy of the Renaissance is, at its best, too artificial and unreal to be wholly satisfactory. Had Shakespeare been born a Ferrarese and passed his life under the same sky as Messer Lodovico, would he have confined his genius to the production of plays after the model of the *Comedy of Errors*?

Messer Lodovico was very busy in directing the dramatic performances of the next Carnival, 1532 (for him practically the last), when Don Ercole invited the Paduan comedian, Angelo Beolco, called Ruzzante, with his company to Ferrara. Ruzzante had previously taken part in the entertainments of 1529, when he and his company, men and women, had danced and sung round the tables at the banquet which had already been enlivened by the *Cassaria*. In February, 1532, Ariosto superintended the performance of one of Ruzzante's comedies, of Celio Calcagnini's Plautine translations, and of his own *Cassaria*—for the last time before the destruction of his beloved scene.³ This Carnival may be said to have brought his connection with the stage to an end.

¹ Letter of February 20, 1531. Fontana, i. pp. 152, 153. We have already seen (present work, p. 203) that a version of the *Cassaria* had been played on Sunday, January 24, 1529, as a prelude to the banquet given by Don Ercole to Duke Alfonso, the Marchesana Isabella, and the flower of Ferrarese society. The *venti anni* of the prologue, if taken literally, would refer us to 1529. Girolamo da Sestula's letter, however, clearly implies that the version played in 1531 was a novelty, from which we are tempted to infer that the comedy of 1529 was a less complete *rifacimento* of the old play, substituted in haste for the postponed French translation of the *Menæchmi*.

² *Discorso sulle Comedie e sulle Tragedie* (*Scritti estetici*, ii.), pp. 21, 22.

³ Letters from Girolamo da Sestula to Isabella d'Este, Fontana, i. p. 163; letter from Ruzzante to Don Ercole, Campori, *Notizie per la Vita di Lodovico Ariosto*, pp. 53, 54.

There were great preparations in the summer of this year for the dramatic performances at Mantua, that were to form part of the entertainment provided for the Emperor. Besides designing the triumphal arches and the decorations of the streets, Giulio Romano painted the scenery for the comedies, under the direction of Giovan Jacomo Calandra, who was now warden of the castle of Mantua.

Apparently, Duke Federigo had at first thought of having all Ariosto's comedies performed, and had instructed Calandra to ask the poet for them in his name. Ariosto at once sent all the four to his Excellence. 'There are two of them,' he wrote, 'that I do not think you have ever seen; the others, although they are in print by the fault of persons who robbed me of them, are not so in the way I have transformed them; especially the *Cassaria*, which is almost entirely renovated. If they satisfy your Excellence, I shall be much delighted. I beseech you to be pleased not to let them go in such a way that they be printed another time, for, besides that I do not believe that they would print them more correctly than they did before, I am aware that they contain errors in the matter of language which, as I am now occupied in something else, I have had no time to correct; and also the transcriber has not used the diligence that he could have done. I have no time to revise them any more, because I do not want your Excellence's messenger to come without them, and so would rather you should have them now, not so well written, than by my delaying make you suspect that I am less prompt to serve you than it is my duty to be.'¹

Messer Lodovico was probably disagreeably surprised when the four comedies came back to Ferrara by what we should now call return of post. Federigo was more than courteous, but he had his own ideas about the legitimate drama. 'By the chamberlain whom I sent to Ferrara,' he wrote, 'I have received, together with your letter of the 18th of this month, your four comedies which you have sent me. They have been most acceptable to me, both for their beauty and for the quick-

¹ Letter clxxxiii., dated Ferrara, March 18, 1532. He wrote simultaneously to Calandra in a similar strain (Letter clxxxii.). The other matter that was absorbing all his attention was, of course, the preparation of the final edition of the *Orlando* for the press.

ness with which I have seen you send them as soon as they were asked of you in my name, for which I thank you much. Although the plots of all of them are beautiful, and they are excellently written, nevertheless I do not like to have them recited in verse, and so I am sending them back to you. If you have the last two written in prose, and also the *Cassaria* refashioned and changed as is this in verse, I shall be pleased if you have a copy made for me; and do not fear that here they can go into the hands of any one who would have them printed. And I shall add this to the obligation that I am under towards you for having sent them in this form—which is truly more artistic and learned, but would not, I think, be so successful when recited as was the prose.’¹

The poet’s answer is brief and dignified. ‘I am sorry,’ he wrote, ‘that my comedies, through being in verse, have not satisfied your Excellence. To me it seemed that they were better so than in prose; but opinions differ. I wrote the last two from the outset in this strange fashion, and I am sorry that I have not also done them in prose, to have been able to satisfy you with them. You must be content to accept my good will. I thank you that, since they do not do for you, you have sent them back to me at once.’²

The Duke of Mantua was not alone in preferring to have comedies written in prose. ‘Few comedies please me save those of Messer Lodovico Ariosto,’ says Varchi in the *Ercolano*, ‘and those pleased me more in prose than afterwards in verse.’ Giralaldi, on the other hand, while censuring Ariosto’s invention of the *versi sdruccioli* as removing the language of comedy too far from the speech of daily life, pleads for the use of plain blank verse, *versi sciolti* or *endecasillabi piani*. Ercole Bentivoglio, Ariosto’s other devoted poetic disciple, also did not imitate his master in this matter, but wrote his two extant comedies—the *Fantasma* and the *Geloso*—in plain blank verse.

While much uncertainty of practice prevailed in this respect through the rest of the sixteenth century in Italy, it may be said that prose holds the field. There were, however, a certain number of comedies written in Ariosto’s sliding measure, and

¹ Letter of March 25, 1532. D’Ancona, *Origini*, ii. p. 432 n.

² Letter clxxxvi., dated Ferrara, April 5, 1532.

a few in *versi sciolti*. The comedies of Pietro Aretino, of Anton Francesco Grazzini, of Firenzuola, of Giovan Battista Gelli, the *Aridosio* of Lorenzino de' Medici, and (to take a later example) the *Candelaio* of Giordano Bruno, are all in prose. Those of Lionardo Salviati are in simple blank verse. Giammaria Cecchi (1518-1587) wrote impartially in all three forms—prose, *versi sciolti*, *versi sdruccioli*.¹ Luigi Alamanni wrote a comedy entitled *La Flora* (published in 1556), of which the prologue is in Ariosto's comic rhythm, while the play itself is written in a peculiar *verso sdrucciolo* of sixteen syllables with the accent on the fourteenth syllable. Lodovico Dolce's comedies are some in prose, others in the usual *versi sdruccioli*—which latter, however, in the prologue to the *Marito*, he regards as contrary to the use of his day and defends by the example of Ariosto:—

‘Egli però non erra : e ’n questo seguita
Non pur colui, che già scrisse i *Suppositi*,
Ma i più degni, honorati, antichi Comici.’²

As Messer Lodovico wrote to the Duke of Mantua, *li giudicii son diversi*. To the present writer it seems that Ariosto, with his *verso sdrucciolo*, had found the ideal golden mean between poetry and prose, by his masterly use and variation of it at once lifting the language of his comedies above the obviousness of the latter and saving it from the unreality, for purpose of dialogue, of the former.

‘I am very sorry,’ wrote Ariosto to Guidobaldo della Rovere, on his return from Mantua a few months before his death, in answer to the request of the hereditary prince of Urbino for some comedy of his that had not been produced, ‘not to be able to satisfy you in a thing of so small importance, whom

¹ In the *Rivali*, in the prologue, he excuses himself for making a Spaniard speak in his own tongue, while the rest, although not Florentines, speak pure Florentine, by appealing to the examples of Plautus and Ariosto:—

‘Nè è questo peccato : poichè Plauto
Fece questo medesimo nel *Penolo* ;
E ’l divino Ariosto anco, a chi cedono
Greci, Latini e Toscan, tutti i comici,
Ne la *Cassaria* ; e tanto di ciò bastivi.

² ‘He (the author) is not, however, wrong ; and in this he follows not only him who of old wrote the *Suppositi*, but the most worthy, honoured, classical comic poets.’

I would fain serve with all my means and with my life. But your Excellence must know that I have only written four comedies; of which two, the *Suppositi* and the *Cassaria*, were stolen from me by the actors twenty years ago when they were represented in Ferrara, and printed to my very great displeasure. Then, about three years ago, I took up the *Cassaria* again, and changed it almost all and entirely rewrote it, and amplified it in the form in which the Lord Marco Pio sent a copy to your Excellence; and in this new form it has been represented in this city, and not elsewhere. The other two, to wit, the *Lena* and the *Negromante*, have been recited in this city only, as far as I know. I have no other comedies. It is true that, many years ago, I began another, which I call the *Studenti*; but, because of many occupations, I have never finished it; and, if I were to finish it, I could not prevent the Lord Duke my patron and the Lord Don Ercole from making me have it recited in Ferrara, before I gave a copy of it elsewhere. So your Excellence must hold me excused.¹

This last play, now known as the *Scolastica*, was still unfinished when Ariosto died. His son Virginio asked Giulio Guarini of Modena to complete it, and, when the latter proved unable or unwilling, finished it himself in prose, and called it *La Imperfetta*. The modest and filial spirit of Virginio's prologue more than disarms criticism:—

‘I come before you only to let you know the name of the author of this fable, which is rightly called *La Imperfetta*; for it was begun by the same author who gave us the *Cassaria*, the *Lena*, the *Negromante*, and the *Suppositi*; which comedies must be known to you. Now this one, thus imperfect, was left by the author, with his other moveable goods, to his son, and received by him as a very dear sister. He did his best to have an end made for it which should match its beginning; but he could not get his desire fulfilled, so that it was necessary for him to take the pen and himself, too, become a comic poet.’

The whole of this prologue (which is in verse) is extant

¹ Letter cxciij., December 17, 1532. Similarly, in Letter clxxxii., to Calandra, the poet says that he began this comedy *già molti anni*. Pigna is, therefore, clearly in error when he states (*I Romanzi*, p. 104) that it was begun on the occasion of Don Ercole's marriage with Renée.

but the rest of Virginio's work has disappeared. Probably it was regarded as unsuccessful, for the version of the comedy that we now possess was finished in verse by Gabriele Ariosti, some time between 1543 and 1548, apparently at the bidding of Duke Ercole II.¹ In spite of an obvious falling off in the later scenes, it reads well as a fairly harmonious whole.

The *Scolastica* is an admirable comedy of the University life of the epoch. Two young students at the Studio of Pavia, Claudio and Eurialo, a Veronese and Ferrarese respectively, lodge together according to the custom of the time in the house of a professor of law, Messer Lazzaro, as his pupils, and naturally temper the severity of their legal studies with love-making. Claudio wins the heart of the Professor's own fair daughter, Flaminia, while Eurialo is enamoured of Ippolita, the servant of a noble lady of the city. By the machinations of the Professor, who has other intentions for his child, Claudio is expelled from Pavia. A concatenation of circumstances brings all parties to Ferrara, where we are given the usual diverting farcical episodes of mistaken identities, sharp or clownish servants, trusting fathers made the lawful prey of their love-sick sons, and the like. Finally, Claudio is reconciled to Messer Lazzaro and wedded to Flaminia (who does not appear upon the scenes), while Bartolo, Eurialo's father, discovers that Ippolita is the bastard daughter of his old friend, Gentile, who had left him all his property on condition of his seeing Ippolita's mother respectably married, providing her with a dowry, while adopting the daughter as his own.

Like all Ariosto's comedies, the play is full of curious little glimpses of the manners and conditions of life in sixteenth century Ferrara, and disfigured by unsavoury equivoques and occasional obscenities of diction. There is less of the satirical element than in his others, though many of its hearers must have winced at the allusions to the abundance and poverty of counts and countesses in a society where even the barbers

¹ Giraldi, the dedication of whose work is dated April 20, 1543, only knew Virginio's prose version; though (it may be noted) he calls the play *La Scolastica*, the title which Gabriele afterwards gave it (*Discorso sulle Comedie e sulle Tragedie*, loc. cit., p. 22). The dedicatory preface of the first printed edition of the play as we now have it (*Scolastica. Comedia di M. Lodovico Ariosto novellamente posta in luce*), with Gabriele's prologue, is dated Venice, January 15, 1547 (i.e. 1548). Gabriele died in 1549.

try to appear nobles.¹ The simple, conscientious parish priest, who is not a theologian and will not absolve Bartolo any more until he fulfils his old promise to his dead friend by seeking out Ippolita and her mother, is contrasted with the unctuous Dominican preacher of the Duomo, whose powers of absolving and commuting are most ample, and who comforts the more or less penitent sinner with the assurance that 'there is not in the world an obligation so strong that it cannot be dissolved by alms.'²

The character of Bartolo himself is well drawn. By perpetually putting off the evil day, impelled in part, perhaps, as he asserts, by love for his son and anxiety for his interests, he has insensibly been led on, step by step, to do this disloyalty and treason to his dead friend; but, through all these years, his conscience has never been at rest. He is a good father according to his lights, and (as usual with Ariosto) the scene in which he rebukes Eurialo is vivid and even powerful. And, at the end, lulled perhaps by the sonorous bulls of his Dominican adviser, he still conceals the truth, and regards the marriage of Eurialo with Ippolita as sufficient reparation. 'It has not seemed to me necessary that every one should understand the most valid reason that has moved me to let Eurialo have the girl; nor am I willing that it should be known.'³ The fact that Bartolo and Gentile had been together in the service of Lodovico Sforza, and shared his flight into the Tyrol, puts the play into touch with contemporary history, and gives it an air of verisimilitude.

Claudio, though a mere sketch, is more romantic and impassioned in his love than the usual young man of Messer Lodovico's comedies. He is gentle and sentimental, even in his despair and jealousy, when for a while he believes that Ippolita is Flaminia, and that Eurialo by treachery has supplanted him in her favour:—

'Bonifacio. O che volete voi per questo affiggervi?
Morir per questo? Quasi che le femine
Debban mancare al mondo! Sete giovane,
Ricco e bello: n' harete in abundantia
Anchora, tal che vi verrà a fastidio.

¹ Cf. Act iii. Scene 6; Act iv. Scene 4; Act v. Scene 4.

² Act iii. Scene 6.

³ Act v. Scene 4.

- Claudio.* Ah lasso ! io vo' morir.
Bonifacio. Fate buon animo.
Claudio. Volete voi farmi piacer ? Lasciatemi
 Qui sol.
Bonifacio. Cotesto non ricerca il debito
 De l'amor ch' io vi porto.
Claudio. Non amandomi
 Colei che sola al mondo amo, e mancandomi
 Colui di fede di chi sol fidavomi,
 Non curo nè d'amor nè d'amicitia
 Di persona del mondo. M' habbia in odio
 Ognuno, ognuno ingannimi e tradiscami ;
 Ch' anch' io vo' odiar ognuno, e mai non essere
 Ad alcuno fedele, e donne et huomini,
 Sia chi si vuol, menar tutti a una regola.
Bonifacio. Questo non è parlar d' huomo c' habbia animo
 Maschio.
Claudio. Non so s' io l' habbia maschio o femina :
 So ben ch' io l' ho mal contento, e che d' essere
 Meco gl' incresce ; et è per far ogni opera
 D' abbandonarmi tosto, abbandonatomi
 Havendo quella ch' a suo modo volgere
 Lo potea.'¹

An Elizabethan dramatist would, perhaps, have made him call his former friend to an account, and have turned the thing into a tragedy before the misunderstanding is cleared up ; but Claudio's sole thought is to efface himself, as soon and as completely as possible. When he discovers the truth, he is no less expansive in seeking his friend, to whom to confide his joy and acknowledge his unjust suspicion ; and, if his

¹ ' *Bonifacio.* O come ! will you afflict yourself for this, die for this ? As if women would be lacking in the world ! You are young, rich, and fair ; you will still have them in such abundance that it will become an annoyance to you.

Claudio. Alack ! I would fain die.

Bonifacio. Be of good heart.

Claudio. Would you do me a kindness ? Leave me here alone.

Bonifacio. The duty of the love I bear you asks not this.

Claudio. Since she loves me not whom alone in the world I love, and he fails me in faith whom alone I trusted, I care not for love nor friendship of any one in the world. Let all hate me, all deceive me and betray me ; for I, too, will hate all and never be faithful to any, but treat all—men and women, be they who they may—by one same rule.

Bonifacio. This is not talk for a man that has a manly soul.

Claudio. I know not if mine is manly or womanish ; I know well that it is miserable, and that it grieves to stay with me ; and it will do all it can to abandon me soon, since she has abandoned me who could turn it as she pleased' (Act ii. Scene 5).

confidence to the coarse-minded Veronese grates upon us, we must make allowance for the conventions of Renaissance comedy. He bears himself with courtesy and modesty when Messer Lazzaro, circumstances having altered, is constrained to seek instead of rejecting him as a son-in-law. The whole play seems to leave a pleasanter taste than its predecessors.

Much more than the obscenity of its opening lines may surely be forgiven Gabriele Ariosti for the rest of the prologue, which is of no small value to the student of the life of Messer Lodovico. The charming fancy with which it ends was, perhaps, suggested by Boccaccio's beautiful and priceless story of Dante appearing in a dream to reveal to his son the place where the last cantos of the *Paradiso* lay concealed at his death:—

‘I say that, shortly before your comic poet gave back his body to the earth and his soul to the eternal Mover, he had begun a comedy, and was preparing to finish it as he had done the others; for his mind was always bent upon gratifying the wishes of his Prince, of foreigners, and of his fellow-citizens and nobles, who all enjoyed his inventions, and many times had enjoyed them so much in public and in private that they still talk of them with praise. He then being dead, the conclusion of his fable died, but not the desire in whoso had seen its beginning. Thence came it that many intimate friends of the deceased poet turned to one of the three brothers who had survived him, beseeching and pressing him to consent to give an end to this fable. And they all urged him on the same grounds: to wit, that they had both had the same teacher, that they had both followed the same studies, and that time had been not less propitious to one than to the other, because there was not much difference between them in age. This they said, but they sang to one deaf. He knew himself much weaker in wit and in power than such a labour needs. More is required than to have read grammar, to have mastered the accents and the syllables, studied the *Ars Poetica* of Horace, and devoured all the books that are printed! Needs must Heaven aid the man who is to write verses and adorn the stage with fine subjects. And further, he perceived how difficult it would be, and impossible to guess what the first author of the work had intended to invent, to

complete the story he had begun; and he was persuaded that it would be easier to make an entirely new play of it. Other reasons, too, warned him not to take upon himself the fellowship of the poets. . . .

‘But, afterwards, not many days passed when he was informed that also the Prince desired that the work should be brought to an end—though not, indeed, that he should do it, because a good judgment could understand, as I have already told you, that he was not competent for such a task. On this, he of whom I speak turned all his attention to do a thing to please his Excellence; and, not knowing to whom else better to turn, he resolves with humble prayers and tears to try if he can draw the soul of his brother to the upper world, that he may explain to him what end he had intended for his fable. To him, then, he turns and prays him for this, and informs him of the wish of the Prince, reminding him of the long and pleasant shelter he had in his Court, and the numberless kind favours he heaped upon him. Four times had he repeated his anxious prayers, when in sleep the brother appeared to the brother, in form and costume as he had shown himself many times upon our stage to recite prologues, and sometimes to play a part in the comedy and direct the whole performance. “Brother,” he said, “thy many prayers, and, still more, my reverence for my Prince, have brought me to tell thee the end of my comedy. Thou must prepare thy memory to be an adequate receptacle for much that still remains to conclude it.” There remained yet a good while before the dawn, when he began at the very place where the work left off, and with fitting speech brought it even to the end, when it says: *O spettatori, andatene in pace*. And, when it was finished, he departed in peace. He who had hearkened at once rose up; and, seeing the sun already shooting forth its rays so that it was light enough to write, not trusting much to his memory, he would not drop the pen from his hand till he had written the completion of the fable as the holy soul had dictated to him.

‘Listen then to the *Scolastica*, made all entire by your poet; and, if the part added should seem to you to differ somewhat in style, do not think it strange; for, after all, the dead are not like the living.’

CHAPTER XIV

THE END OF AN EPOCH

THE eighteen months' truce that the Emperor had prevailed upon the Pope to grant to Alfonso had nearly expired, when, on September 25, 1534, Clement VII. died. 'May God pardon him his sins,' writes the chronicler of Modena; 'but in very sooth he has been a bad Pope for Italy, and worse for his own soul; for he has been the cause of the ruin of Florence, his own native land, through his desire of restoring his Medici, and the cause of the ruin of Rome. He has never let his enemies have any peace, nor has he gained it either for himself; he, too, has gone to the earth as he made others go, without his content in this world, and God knows how he will have it in the other world, for I think that his Holiness will have to render vast account of the damage and sack of Rome, and the ruin of Florence, with all the rest of Italy, which has suffered greatly because of him. And I believe that Death will not be content with his Holiness, for she could go after other great lords, as the Duke of Ferrara, who at present is ill.'¹

Alfonso's satisfaction at the tidings of the death of his enemy was enhanced when he heard that Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, whom he regarded as his friend, was elected to the Papacy, on October 12, as Paul III. But his pleasure was brief. Don Ercole was preparing to start for Rome with a splendid company, to congratulate the new Pontiff in his father's name, when, on October 28, the Duke fell seriously ill—through eating too much melon, it is said—and, on the last day of the month, he died.

Duke Alfonso's last will and testament, dated August 28,

¹ T. de' Bianchi, iv. pp. 392, 400.

1533, is a curious and interesting document.¹ He commends his soul with humble submission 'to his most high Creator, supplicating His Divine Majesty that in His infinite mercy He may deign to call it to a place of bliss,' his body to be buried in the monastery of the Nuns of the Corpus Domini, in a marble tomb to be made 'near the place where the most illustrious Duchess was buried, his mother of blessed memory.' Immediately after his death, there are to be said ten thousand Masses in remission of his sins, among the monasteries of the city and especially in the cathedral; and, in addition to these Masses, he also disposes that the Mass of St. Gregory be said for his soul in every convent and monastery of his city of Ferrara.

To his beloved nephews, the Dukes of Milan and Mantua, he leaves two of his best falcons and two of his best horses, respectively; to the Duke of Calabria, his best leopard; to Queen Bona of Poland, one of his best carpets. Similarly, 'to the most illustrious and most excellent lady, Madama Isabella, Marchesana of Mantua, his most beloved sister, in testimony of the singular love he bears her, in order that she may continually be reminded of the person of the Lord Testator, a goodly caparison for a bed of cambric cloth worked with gold, of the finest that will be found in his wardrobe.' To Renée, his most beloved daughter-in-law, he leaves 'a gem or precious stone set in gold, of that preciousness and worth that is fitting to the person and dignity of that most illustrious lady, according to the judgment of his universal heir, as a pledge of the most cordial and sincere love that he bears her, and that she may remember the said Lord Testator, who to the utmost of his power commends all his sons to her, praying her in every contingency to keep them under her protection, and always to lend them her just and loving aid, defence, and favour; as the most illustrious Lord Testator trusts that she will do, because of the exceeding goodness and supreme gentleness and excellent bearing of that most illustrious Madama.' To his infant grandchild, Donna Anna, he leaves, 'besides his benediction,

¹ The original is in the Biblioteca Civica of Ferrara. I quote from the copy in the *Archivio Vaticano*, xlvii. 1.

a gold necklace with a cross at the end of it adorned with precious stones, according to what his heir shall think fit, which this illustrious lady is to wear in memory of the said most illustrious Lord Testator.' To his nephew, Gurone di Sigismondo d'Este, he leaves the former Cantelmi palace in the contrada of S. Maria in Vado, in fief, with an annuity; to 'the most illustrious and venerable Suora Eleonora, his most beloved daughter, professed in the monastery of the Body of Christ,' six thousand gold ducats, besides what the nuns of the monastery have had, and throughout her life the heir is also bound to supply her with all she wants or demands. To Don Ippolito, he leaves the castle of Brescello, to be held in fief of Ercole; the palace near San Francesco in which the Queen of Naples used to live, with thirteen thousand gold scudi to furnish and put it in order; Belfiore, Miaro, possessions in the district of Carpi, the mills of Conselice and Bagnacavallo, customs in Reggio, silver plate, and an annuity of twelve hundred ducats. To Don Francesco, he leaves the castle of Massa di Lombardia in fief; Schifanoia, with thirteen thousand gold scudi to put it in order; other palaces and possessions in the Ferrarese and Carpignano; silver plate and an annuity of twelve hundred ducats.

By his ducal power, he legitimises and declares legitimate his two natural sons, Don Alfonso and Don Alfonsino, both *nasciuto di se soluto et di donna soluta*. To Alfonso, he leaves the castle of Montecchio in the Reggiano, to be held by him and his descendants in fief of the universal heir; a palace in the Via degli Angeli, with two thousand scudi, to be paid on his death; various other possessions, customs, mills, etc.; plate and an annuity of six hundred ducats. To Alfonsino, he leaves the fief of Castelnovo in the Reggiano; a palace in Ferrara (the Paradiso or another), with a sum of money to put it into order; various possessions, including the famous hostelry of the Angel in Ferrara, with a number of exemptions from taxes and imposts, the universal heir being bound to repair it and not to allow any other hostelry to be erected in the city or its suburbs with similar privileges; he is also to have the mills of Finale, silver plate, and an annuity of six hundred ducats. Until fourteen years old, he is to live

with his brother Alfonso. No son of the Testator's can be deprived, in whole or in part, of these legacies for any fault, however grave, excepting for treason committed against the person and state of the universal heir. All these rights and possessions indicated he leaves to Don Alfonso and Don Alfonsino for their support, 'judging this to be fitting, considering the quality of the person of the Lord Testator, and of these Lords, his sons, in order that they may be able honourably to preserve the dignity and nobility of the House of Este, from which they are descended.'

All the four sons are to be under the government, obedience, and protection of Don Ercole, the Testator 'commanding expressly that all his sons should render the same honour, reverence, and obedience to the said Lord Don Ercole as they rendered, and at present render, to the person of the Lord Testator himself, and praying the Lord Don Ercole to receive all and each of his brothers under his protection.' Of all the rest of his possessions, the Duke names Don Ercole his universal heir, 'and with all his heart commends him, his most beloved son, to the most high God and all the Celestial Court.'

By a codicil, dated October 28, 1534, 'moved chiefly by the offence and injury that Don Francesco, his legitimate and natural son, has done him, the which has wounded his very soul and he reposes great, nay, most grievous, in that the said Don Francesco so inconsiderately, without the leave and knowledge and utterly against the will of the said most illustrious Lord Duke, has clandestinely abandoned his Excellence and his native land, and gone to stay and dwell in foreign parts¹; wishing to give him, if not condign and corresponding punishment, at least such that he may know that he has supremely displeased his Excellence, and may repent the error and excess committed'; the Duke annuls the legacy of thirteen thousand scudi, and strictly entails all else that he has left him. Only

¹ Allured by the splendid promises of the French Court, Francesco had secretly and suddenly left Ferrara and gone to France, thus giving the King a pledge for the Estensi, which he had long time desired and the Duke had always refused. Among the letters of Renée to Ercole, there is one dated October 15, 1534, in which she rejoices that the King has received Don Francesco kindly. Fontana, i. p. 202.

his legitimate male descendants can inherit, and, if they fail, all his share of the inheritance is to go to his elder brothers and their heirs.

It is clear from the will that, in spite of the tradition to the contrary, Alfonso never married Laura Dianti—unless, indeed, as more than one of his predecessors had done in a like case, he made her his wife on his deathbed, when it was too late for her to share the honours of the throne. It is even more clear that he dreaded lest some such terrible contention between his sons might arise, as his own accession had so horribly witnessed. But in this his apprehensions were groundless. Ercole was a man of milder mood, nor was there the slightest risk of the second Ippolito and Don Francesco repeating the tragedy of the elder Ippolito and Don Ferrando, who still lived on in his prison in the Tower of the Lions. Laura's children were still little more than babies. On November 1, Ettore Sacrato, as Judge of the Twelve Sages, solemnly proclaimed Ercole the Second, Duke of Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio, and Lord of Carpi; and, on November 2, the body of the dead sovereign, after lying in state in the Corte Vecchia, was borne in procession to the church of the nuns of the Corpus Domini, and laid to rest by the side of his mother, Leonora of Aragon, and his wife, Lucrezia Borgia. If the marble tomb desired by him was ever raised, no trace remains of it to-day in the choir of the secluded church of the nuns; only 'a slab lying before the high altar records the names of Lucrezia Borgia, of Alfonso I., and his mother, Eleonora of Aragon.'¹

Alfonso had continued, not unworthily, the tradition of the princes of his House as patrons of Art—though it was roughly broken through at intervals by his own imperious and despotic temper. In the earlier years of his reign, though he had in vain attempted to get a picture by Leonardo da Vinci, he seems chiefly to have relied upon native talent. The services of Lorenzo Costa, the greatest Ferrarese painter of his generation, were monopolised by the Duke's sister, Isabella, at Mantua, in succession to Andrea Mantegna; but Lodovico Mazzolino and Ercole Grandi were kept fully employed by

¹ Ella Noyes, *The Story of Ferrara*, p. 366.



THE MADONNA AND CHILD

*By Donato Donati,
(Borghese Gallery, Rome.)*

Alfonso and by Lucrezia, in the Castello, which the Duke had begun to embellish on his succession, in the private apartments of the Duchess, and elsewhere. Nevertheless, the chief painter of the Court was the Friulan (of Dalmatian origin), Martino di Battista da Udine, better known as Pellegrino da San Daniele, who spent much time in Ferrara between 1502 and 1513, working both for Alfonso and for Cardinal Ippolito, whose palace he decorated in 1507; we have met him as the scene-painter of the *Cassaria* at its first performance; but no traces of his work at Ferrara survive. Afterwards his place was taken by a far greater artist, the one painter of the front rank that Ferrara ever produced: Giovanni di Lutero, known as Dosso Dossi.

The struggle with Pope Julius naturally interrupted Alfonso's artistic pursuits—even as it shattered Michelangelo's noble bronze to pieces. It was probably in 1512, on the occasion of his enforced visit to Rome, that the Duke made the acquaintance of both Raphael and Michelangelo. The few years of comparative peace and security that the pontificate of Leo gave him afforded the opportunity of further embellishing the Castello and Corte, and of acquiring works of art. In 1517, Alfonso received a Madonna from Fra Bartolommeo and a Head of Christ, which latter had apparently been commissioned by Lucrezia.¹ About the same time Titian, who had first come to Ferrara in 1515, painted for him the exquisite *Cristo della Moneta*, now at Dresden. Mythological representations were, however, more to the taste of the husband of Lucrezia Borgia. He was bent upon the decoration of his 'alabaster chambers' (so called from the work in marble or stucco by Alfonso Lombardi on the walls), which were over the covered way that leads from the Corte to the Castello—rooms which were destined to be destroyed by fire in the seventeenth century. One room, known as the Duke's *camerino*, was to be the gem of the whole. Dosso Dossi carried out the minor decorations, and frescoed the ceiling with Aeneas, Venus, Mars, and Vulcan; but the walls were to be hung with the choicest masterpieces by the greatest painters of the day, in honour of Bacchus and Venus. The

¹ Cf. Gruyer, i. p. 146.

aged Giovanni Bellini, in 1514, began for the series his last work, the Bacchanalian Feast, generally identified with the picture at Alnwick Castle. Titian finished his master's work, and followed it up with those three wonderful painted lyrics of the joy of life—the 'Worship of Venus,' the 'Arrival of Bacchus at Naxos,' and the 'Bacchus and Ariadne'—executed between 1518 and 1523. Pellegrino da San Daniele painted a 'Triumph of Bacchus.' For this or other rooms in the palace, Dosso Dossi painted his glowing, mysterious 'Circe,' and other works in the same romantic vein; Benvenuto Tisio da Garofolo, who stands to Dosso much as Tasso does to Ariosto, left painting grave Saints and graceful Madonnas to please the Duke with fables of the older gods. These things and others of their kind became the spoil of the Aldobrandini, when the nephew and legate of Pope Clement VIII. occupied Ferrara, and are now scattered far and wide through all the galleries of Europe.

Connected with these alabaster rooms is one of the most unpleasant episodes in Alfonso's life. In 1517, Raphael had promised to do for him 'the best thing he ever did,' which was to be the 'Triumph of Bacchus in India,' to complete the series of pictures in the *camerino*. He sent the design to Ferrara; but, hearing that Pellegrino had painted a picture from it, he offered to do another subject—which appears to have been the 'Hunt of Meleager,' that same theme to which Mr. Swinburne has given fresh life in our own days. Ultimately, he seems to have agreed to the former, or to both subjects. In the meanwhile, he sent Alfonso certain of his cartoons, including that of the St. Michael, which Lorenzo de' Medici was having painted with the Pope's money as a present to the King of France.¹ A little later, the Duke instructed Alfonso Paolucci to press Raphael for his picture; but the ambassador found it very hard to get access to the artist, who

¹ Beltrando Costabili, writing to the Duke on September 21, 1518, says that the painter in giving him the St. Michael cartoon 'has begged me to write to your Excellence not to have it coloured, since the King of France has had it coloured by his hand' (Campori, *Notizie inedite di Raffaello da Urbino*, p. 120). This, apparently, means that the Duke must not have a picture painted from it; but Dosso Dossi seems to have done so, the result being now at Dresden (Cf. Morelli, *Critical Studies of Italian Painters*, vol. ii., English ed., pp. 142, 143).

was too much occupied in painting the 'Transfiguration' for Cardinal de' Medici and the portrait of Baldassare Castiglione to see him. He advised his master to write to Raphael himself; but the Duke had grown furious. 'We do not think fit,' he wrote, 'to write to Raphael da Urbino according to your suggestion; but we wish you to find him, and tell him that you have letters from us by which we write you that it is now three years since he has given us only words; and that this is not the way to treat men of our rank; and that, if he does not fulfil his promise towards us, we shall make him know that he has not done well to deceive us. And then, as though from yourself, you can tell him that he had better take care not to provoke our hatred, instead of the love we bear him; for as, if he keeps his promise, he can hope for our support, so on the contrary, if he does not, he can expect one day to get what he will not like. Let all this conversation be between you and him alone.'¹

Paolucci naturally shrank from giving this message to the painter. Presently, the Duke wrote again: 'Find Raphael da Urbino, and ask him what he has done of the work that he had to do for us; and, if you get no more out of him than you have done in the past, tell him (as from yourself) to think well what may be the consequences of giving words to one of our rank and showing that he does not esteem us more than a vile plebeian, since he has lied to us so often, and that you believe that at last we shall be enraged at it. Inform us of what reply he makes you. Then speak to the most reverend Cardinal Cibo; commend us to his Lordship, and tell him that we remember the promise he made us of getting Raphael to finish our picture quickly, and that we pray his Lordship to be pleased to make Raphael put us off no more, or let us clearly know that we need not expect the said picture from him; for, then, we shall have it done by another to complete our *camerino*, which lacks only this.'² To this, Paolucci answered that he reminded Raphael of his debt whenever he met him, but that the latter had always excused himself on the grounds that he was occupied on the 'Transfiguration.'

¹ Letter of September 10, 1519. Campori, *op. cit.*

² Letter of January 20, 1520. *Ibid.*

Dosso's brother, Battista, who was apparently in Rome, assured him that Raphael would entirely finish this by the coming Carnival, and would then begin the Duke's picture. Paolucci wrote, on March 21, that he had actually got into Raphael's house, and that the painter had promised to do what the Duke wanted and was writing to ask Dosso to make his excuses.¹ A few weeks later, on April 6, 1520, Raphael died. Alfonso, to his lasting shame, expressed no sorrow; but insisted upon having back from the painter's heirs some fifty ducats that he had given him on account.

Not altogether dissimilar was the language the Duke thought fit to employ at times with Titian, when one of the pictures he had promised was long in coming. 'We thought,' he wrote to Giacomo Tebaldi, his ambassador at Venice, 'that the painter Titian was going, once for all, to finish that picture of ours; and, because we see that he is making little account of us and shows less esteem, we would have you find him as soon as possible, and tell him from us that we are greatly amazed that he has not chosen to finish our picture, and that he had better by all means come and finish it. Otherwise, we shall be exceedingly angry, and shall show him that he has offended a person who will be able to offend him and to make him know that I am not a man to be deceived.'² On receiving this, Titian came instantly to Ferrara; and, although in the next year we find a more mildly worded protest from the Duke that he did not deserve that the painter should break his promises to him, their relations seem to have remained of the most friendly description.

Vasari tells us that Titian painted an admirable portrait of Alfonso 'with one arm over a great piece of artillery. Likewise he painted the Lady Laura, who was afterwards wife of that Duke, which is a stupendous work.' When Michelangelo came to Ferrara in 1529, the Duke showed him the former picture, 'which was greatly commended by him.'³ It has recently been shown that the original of this portrait of Laura, hitherto thought to be preserved only in copies and in Sadeler's

¹ Letter of March 21, 1520. Campori, *op. cit.*

² Letter of September 29, 1519. Campori, *Tiziano e gli Estensi*, p. 588.

³ *Le Vite*, ed. Milanese, vii. pp. 435, 199.

engraving, is now in a private collection in England.¹ Less kindly has fate treated the portrait of Alfonso himself. At the beginning of 1533, during the Congress of Bologna, the Duke was compelled to give up several of his most cherished artistic treasures, to purchase the favour of the Emperor's rapacious secretary, Francesco Covos, who particularly insisted upon having this portrait, although Alvarotti and Casella assured him that it was painted so long ago that it was no longer like their sovereign. Titian then began to paint another to take its place. This was not finished at the time of Alfonso's death, but was completed for Don Ercole, who brought it back in person from Venice at the beginning of 1537, giving Titian a silver vase and two hundred gold scudi in addition to the sum agreed upon.² Writing to Niccolò Buonleo of the liberality of the second Duke Ercole, Pietro Aretino says: 'Messer Tiziano says on this subject that, since he painted princes, he never had a more royal reward than what the Duke gave him for the image of his father.'³ Formerly these two pictures were identified with two portraits ascribed to Titian, at Madrid and in the Pitti Gallery, respectively. Morelli's suggestion that the latter is a Ferrarese copy, probably by Dosso Dossi, from one or other of Titian's originals, is now generally accepted; while the picture at Madrid is almost certainly a portrait by Titian of Duke Ercole II., painted some years later, as a comparison with the medal by Benvenuto Cellini will show. A striking picture at Modena (reproduced in the present work), by one or other of the two Dossi, is usually described as a free copy from Titian's lost work, but to me it seems a practically independent portrait.⁴ In the background is seen one of the Duke's great martial achievements against the fleets and armies of the Venetian Republic; probably, an episode of the first battle of La Polesella.

With Michelangelo, on the other hand, Duke Alfonso was

¹ See Herbert Cook, *Titian's Portrait of Laura de' Dianti*, in the *Burlington Magazine*, September, 1905.

² Campori, *op. cit.*, p. 604.

³ Letter of January 6, 1538. *Il Secondo Libro de le lettere di M. Pietro Aretino* (Venice, 1542), pp. 19, 20.

⁴ Possibly the picture that Battista Dossi painted for Laura Dianti after the Duke's death. Cf. Venturi, *La Galleria Estense in Modena*, p. 30.

all observance and courtesy, and the brusqueness was on the master's side. We have already seen the cannoneer of Ravenna and the painter of apocalyptic visions in secret converse under the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, in 1512. Vasari and Condivi tell us of the honours heaped upon Michelangelo by the Duke in 1529, when he came from Florence to Ferrara, first at the bidding of the Nine of the Militia to study the fortifications, and then as a fugitive. The fate of the 'Leda' that he was painting for the Duke brought their friendship to an abrupt end. When at Venice in October, 1530, Alfonso heard from his ambassador in Florence, Alessandro Guarini, that the picture was finished; he sent a member of his household, one Jacopo Larchi, to arrange about the transfer to Ferrara, with a most friendly and flattering letter, addressing the artist *amico carissimo*, and asking him to name his own price. 'Every hour seems to me a year until I can see it. You will do me the greatest pleasure if you will write to me how much you would like me to send you, because I shall be much surer of your judgment in estimating it than of my own.'¹ An unfortunate remark by Larchi at first sight of the picture ('O questa è una poca cosa') lost the Duke his desired treasure, which the artist gave, together with all the designs for it, to his assistant, Antonio Mini, as a dowry for the latter's two sisters.

Often quoted, and sometimes criticised, has been Messer Lodovico's enumeration of the greatest painters of his day:—

'E quei che furo a nostri dì, o sono hora :
Leonardo, Andrea Mantegna, Gian Bellino,
Duo Dossi ; e quel ch' a par sculpe e colora,
Michel, più che mortale Angel divino ;
Bastiano ; Raphael ; Titian, c' honora
Non men Cador che quei Venetia e Urbino ;
E gli altri di cui tal l' opra si vede
Qual de la prisca età si legge e crede.'²

Of all the painters of the sixteenth century, Ariosto un-

¹ Campori, *Michelangelo Buonarroti e Alfonso I. d' Este*, pp. 138, 139.

² 'And those who were in our days, or now are : Leonardo, Andrea Mantegna, Gian Bellini ; two Dossi ; and he who equally sculptures and paints, Michael, Angel divine more than mortal man ; Sebastian ; Raphael ; Titian, who honours not less Cadore than they Venice and Urbino ; and the others of whom we see such work as is read and believed of the classic age' (*Orlando Furioso*, xxxiii. 2).

doubtedly had most spiritual affinity with Titian and Dosso Dossi. His fine Latin epitaph for Raphael may, perhaps, stand as a reparation from Ferrara to the painter's memory for the vulgar insolence of the Duke.¹ The tradition of Ariosto's intimate friendship with Titian rests upon untrustworthy evidence; but it may be taken for granted that he had much intercourse with that congenial spirit on the occasion of the latter's frequent visits to Ferrara. It has been plausibly suggested that the choice of subjects for Titian's pictures in the *camerino* (for which the master expresses great enthusiasm in a still extant letter to the Duke) was due to Ariosto, and that the so-called 'Sacred and Profane Love' of the Borghese Gallery may be explained by reference to the fountain in the Forest of Ardennes, with the waters of which Rinaldo quenches his love of Angelica.² Be that as it may, it is pleasant to think that the 'Bacchus and Ariadne' of the National Gallery can be associated with Ariosto, who certainly knew and loved his Catullus; and it is certain that the 'Perseus and Andromeda' of the Wallace Collection shows us how he visualised such scenes as the liberation of Angelica by Ruggiero. But with Dosso Dossi we get even nearer Ariosto. Not only is it sometimes impossible to decide whether Dosso's ostensibly religious or mythological pictures are not in reality transcripts from the *Orlando Furioso*, but the informing spirit of their work seems the same. This has been admirably put by Mr. Berenson: 'The Court poet and the Court painter were remarkably alike in the essence of their genius. They were both lovers of 'high romance,' and both had the power to create it—the one in verse, the other in colour—with a splendour that perhaps many other Italians could have equalled, but with a fantasy, a touch of magic, that was more characteristic of English genius in the Elizabethan period than of Italian genius at any time.'³ Dosso's 'Circe' in the Borghese Gallery, his 'Knight with the slain Giant' (the so-called

¹ *Carm.* iii. 1.

² Cf. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Titian*, i. pp. 176, 177, 196-204; Gronau, *Titian*, Eng. ed., pp. 35, 36.

³ *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, i. pp. 31, 32. Giovio, in the *Fragmentum Trium Dialogorum* (pp. 120-124), characterises Dosso as *urbanum ingenium*—*urbanitas* being one of the qualities he has especially ascribed to the *Orlando Furioso*.

'David and Goliath' of the same collection), his 'Saint William' at Hampton Court, his 'Court Jester' at Modena, and, in a graver mood, his heroic 'Madonna with St. George and St. Michael'—these surely are works more akin to the varying moods of Messer Lodovico's *mens impar* than we shall find elsewhere in all the realms of Art.

In addition to the design for the woodcut in the 1532 edition of the *Orlando*, Titian is known to have painted Ariosto's portrait at least once. Two magnificent portraits by Titian in the National Gallery have successively been christened 'Ariosto.' It is absolutely certain that the person represented in the more recently acquired picture is not our poet; but the other, formerly attributed to Palma, agrees in some respects with the woodcut and the medals.¹ A curiously interesting picture in the Cavalieri collection at Ferrara, doubtfully ascribed to Dosso Dossi, appears to be an authentic portrait of Messer Lodovico. The well-known medals by Pastorino de' Pastorini and Domenico Poggini were probably executed after the poet's death. The allegorical designs on the reverses (the bees driven from their hive and the hand shearing the adder's tongue), in spite of a very usual assertion to the contrary, have most likely no reference to Ariosto's quarrel with Cardinal Ippolito.

We know from Vasari that, at the time of Duke Alfonso's death, Titian was engaged upon a mythological picture commissioned by him: 'a picture of a nude girl bending before Minerva, with another figure by her side, and in the background the sea, upon which Neptune appears in his chariot.' Many years later, this design was incorporated into the painted allegory of 'Religion defended by Spain,' which Titian painted for Philip II. after the battle of Lepanto.² Thus did a typical work of the full Renaissance become converted to the service of the Catholic Reaction.

This, indeed, is the spirit that was in the air when Alfonso and Ariosto passed away. The era of the Renaissance was over; the Reformation and the Catholic Reaction were to

¹ Cf. Roger Fry, *Titian's 'Ariosto,'* in the *Burlington Magazine*, November, 1904. The chief difficulty in accepting the 'Palma' portrait as Ariosto lies in the colour of the hair.

² Gronau, *op. cit.*, pp. 188, 189.

fight for the possession of the world. And, indeed, the herald of the new age of the Church of Rome had already passed through the streets of Ferrara. Early in the year 1524, while Ariosto was away in the Garfagnana, there had come a gaunt, lame pilgrim from the Holy Land to Ferrara, from Venice on his way to Genoa, whence he had it in his mind to take ship for his own country—for he was a Spaniard. . At Venice he had been given by a benefactor some fifteen or sixteen *giulii* as alms. ‘And when he was at Ferrara,’ so the pilgrim told one of his disciples in later years, ‘and was praying in the cathedral, a beggar besought an alms of him; to whom he proffered a *marchesino*, which is worth five or six *quattrini*; again there came another after him, to whom he gave a coin worth a little more; after these followed a third, and, since he had now no more smaller money, but only the *giulii*, he gave one of these. The beggars, when they saw him so liberal with his alms, all gathered round him; and in this wise he expended all the money he had. At last, when many were flocking together for the same cause, he answered that they must pardon him, for now he had nothing left.’¹ This Spanish pilgrim was Ignatius of Loyola; but it was not until a year after Ariosto’s death, that, on August 15, 1534, the Society of Jesus sprang into existence at that historic meeting of the first seven Jesuits in the crypt of Notre Dame de Montmartre. In the first quarter of the next century, three of Ariosto’s kindred—grandsons of his brother Gabriele—were to be numbered among the fathers of the Society.

Already the reformation within the Church was at work at Modena. One of the few justifiable acts of aggression towards the House of Este that Clement VII. committed had been to force Giovanni Morone, son of the famous Milanese chancellor, upon them as Bishop of Modena instead of the younger Ippolito, who was already, it will be remembered, Archbishop of Milan. Morone came to Modena on the evening of January 28, 1533, very quietly and without any pomp. A comparatively young man of about twenty-eight, he sang his first Mass in the Duomo on March 25, and straightway set to work to reform

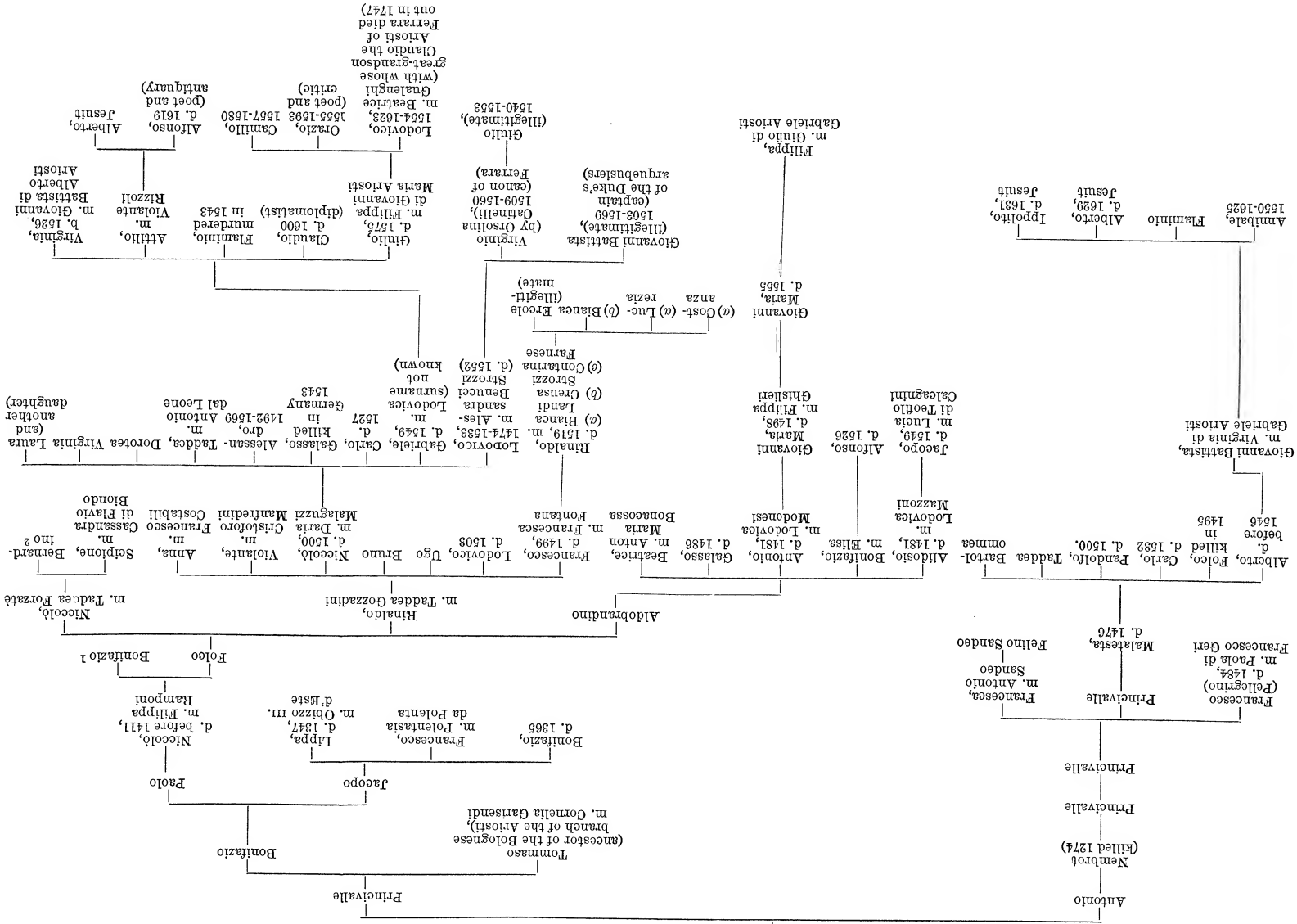
¹ *Acta Antiquissima S. Ignatii Loyolae*, cap. v. In vol. vii. of the *Acta Sanctorum* for July. A *giulio* was a silver piece first coined by Julius II.

the clergy of his diocese. His name represents what was noblest and highest in the story of the Counter-Reformation. In the meanwhile, the Protestant Reformers had entered the duchy and penetrated into the Court. Clement Marot, who had written an epithalamium for the marriage of Ercole and Renée, came to Ferrara about the end of 1534, and became the secretary of the Duchess. In the spring of 1536, a sterner figure, Calvin himself, appeared upon the scene, and, on Good Friday during the Adoration of the Cross, his disciples raised a tumult in the cathedral of Ferrara. The forces of the Reformation and Catholic Reaction were now facing each other, and nowhere in Italy was the conflict to show more dramatic episodes than in the duchy of the Estensi.

In the political arena, the deaths of Alfonso and Clement had left the field clear for new protagonists in Ferrara's struggle for existence against the Papacy, though the rest of the battle, for more than half a century to come, was to be fought out with mainly diplomatic weapons. In the previous year, November 22, 1533, a son and heir had been born to Ercole and Renée, who was destined to be the last effective Duke of Ferrara. Christened Alfonso after his grandfather, he had been held at the baptismal font by his uncle Ippolito in the name of the King of France. Fifteen months later, another Ippolito—son of that Messer Salvestro Aldobrandini who had been exiled by the Mediceans from Florence after the final overthrow of the Republic—was born in banishment at Fano, who, as another Clement, was to expel the new Alfonso's successor, and succeed, where his Medicean predecessors had failed, in reducing Ferrara to the direct dominion of the Holy See.

ALBERTO DA RIOSO

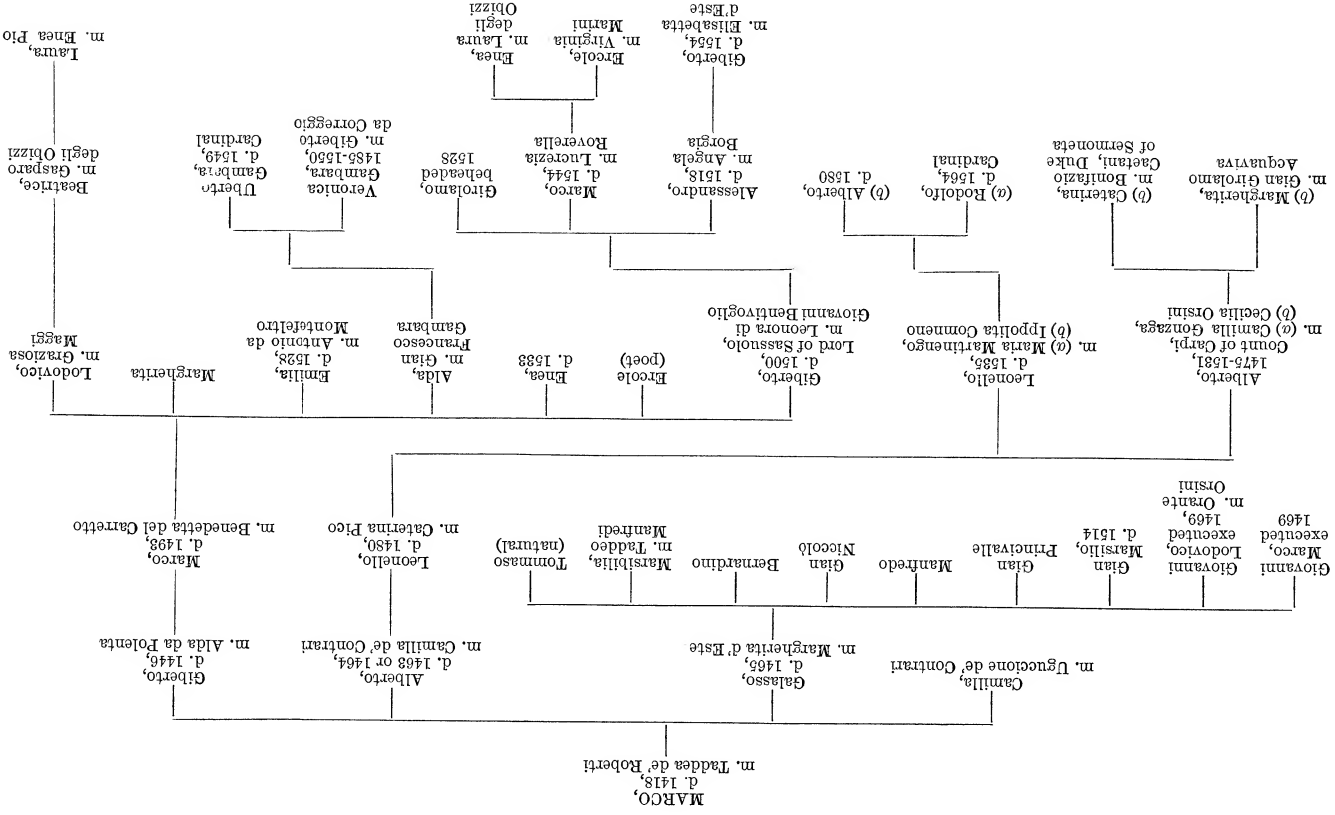
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¹ A great-grandson of this Bonifazio Ariosto is probably the Lodovico Ariosto, contemporary with our poet, who was also in the service of Cardinal Ippolito. ² Bianca, a great-granddaughter of this Bernardino Ariosto, married Reneo, the son of the physician Antonio Musa Brasavola.

[Modified in the main from Litta.]

3



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